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Dean L. May, Department of History, University of Utah
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FRONT COVER: “Along the Docks, New York City,” a wood engraving by A.R. Waud published in *Harper's Weekly* September 4, 1869. The scene is typical of that greeting immigrants to Zion as they landed in East Coast ports between 1869 and 1887. BACK COVER: The Fjeldsgaard family—Mormon immigrants of the steamship era. Courtesy Church Archives. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

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MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION AWARDS FOR 1982

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T. Edgar Lyon Award for Best Article:

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Special Citations:

To those responsible for the preservation and restoration of the Logan Tabernacle.

Steaming Through: Arrangements for Mormon Emigration from Europe, 1869–1887

By Richard L. Jensen

There was much worth remembering about the twin relics of early Mormon emigration — wind power across the Atlantic and ox power overland — and participants in the experience would be venerated as pioneers. However, there were few who mourned the passing of the pre-steam era. The change had been long enough in coming.¹

Europeans bound for the Great Basin Zion had taken advantage of the possibilities of rail travel since 1854, when northeastern ports of entry replaced New Orleans. In 1866, as the Union Pacific Railroad edged its way westward, Brigham Young advised all who wanted church help with emigration to remain in Europe during 1867 and await the 1868 season, when he reasoned that the railroad could cut immigrants' foot-travel in half. Meanwhile, those who came on their own in 1867 were sent as far as the railroad terminus before turning to oxen. Finally, in a massive 1868 mobilization of the church-teams system — in many ways the most effective aid to emigration the Mormons ever devised — immigrants were "brought home" to Zion for the last time, leaving some of their number in the canyons to help complete the preparation of the roadbed for the iron horse.

Richard L. Jensen is a Research Historian in The Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History, Brigham Young University. A version of this paper was given at the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Mormon History Association at Weber State College, May, 1982.

¹Substantial contributions to the study of arrangements for Latter-day Saint emigration from Europe have been made by Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints 1830–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958); by Gustive O. Larson, *Prelude to the Kingdom: Mormon Desert Conquest; A Chapter in American Cooperative Experience* (Francetown, N.H.: Marshall Jones, 1947); by William Mulder, *Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957); and by P. A. M. Taylor, *Expectations Westward: The Mormons and the Emigration of their British Converts in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1965). The present paper seeks to further elucidate the topic for the early steam era in aspects for which additional information can be found in Latter-day Saint archival sources.

Meanwhile, Mormon emigration was slower to adopt the steamship. Although Mormon continental emigrants generally steamed to England before sailing from Liverpool, only Mormon dignitaries, a few well-to-do emigrants, and mail took steamships to America. British Mission president George Q. Cannon declined an offer for the steamer *Great Eastern* in 1861 on the grounds that it offered no real advantage over sailing ships and cost more.² There was an unsuccessful attempt to charter a large steamer for Scandinavians from Hamburg to the United States in 1862,³ and inquiries were made now and then into steam travel from England. By 1867 only 25 percent of all overseas immigrants to the United States were still arriving by sail.⁴ Aware of the fact that a few shillings' difference in fare would decide the emigration possibilities of many of their people, Mormon leaders watched carefully for the right conditions to make the change. Asking his father for direction, British Mission President Brigham Young, Jr., received a rather noncommittal answer in early 1866, followed in February 1867 by a recommendation that steamships be chartered if suitable terms could be arranged.⁵ In June Young's co-worker and successor at Liverpool, Franklin D. Richards, was able to exclaim:

A great point gained A company of Saints going by steam & booked for £4.15. . . . The saints throughout the mission are inspired anew with courage & zeal to press forward and secure their emigration.⁶

Richards followed this up by undertaking preliminary negotiations for 1868 with the owners of the *Manhattan*, the first steamer to carry a Mormon company over the Atlantic. Guion and Company, a firm still in the process of converting from packet ships to steam, were encouraging.⁷ However, the next emigration season brought heavy demand on ships and a cartel of transatlantic steamship companies, of which Guion was a member, agreed on a price hike to £6.6.0, which would have placed emigration beyond the reach of many Mormons planning to leave. Richards explored his limited alternatives, waited as long as he could for a drop in prices, then reverted to sailing vessels.⁸

In the meantime Brigham Young arranged with the Union Pacific for free railroad fare from Omaha to the terminus for all able-bodied males willing to help complete the roadbed. With construction time at a premium he instructed

²George Q. Cannon to Brigham Young, March 1, 1861, Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, hereinafter cited as Church Archives.

³Christian A. Madsen autobiographical sketch, *Morgenstjernen* 3 (1884):120–28.

⁴Report by Dr. John M. Woodworth, Supervising Surgeon, U.S. Marine Hospital Service, in Edith Abbott, ed., *Immigration: Select Documents and Case Records* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press and *The New York Times*, 1969), p. 49.

⁵Brigham Young to Brigham Young Jr., February 22, 1866 and February 2, 1867, Brigham Young Letterbooks, Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives.

⁶Franklin D. Richards Diary, June 21, 1867, Church Archives. The fare was subsequently reduced to £4.12.6.

⁷Papers of the Guion Line, to which I have not yet had access, are located at the Liverpool Record Office. A brief history of the line is found in a British publication, *Sea Breezes* 19 (1955): 190–216.

⁸Franklin D. Richards Diary, January 22, and March 7, 1868, Church Archives. Franklin D. Richards to H. B. Clawson, May 16, 1868, in European Mission Letterpress Copybooks, hereinafter cited as EM Letterbooks, Church Archives.

Richards to contract for steamships.⁹ Having already shipped more than two thousand passengers by sail, Richards arranged for two Guion steamships to carry the balance of the year's Mormon emigrants, despite the persistence of high passenger rates. The advantages of steam travel were underscored by heavy mortality on board one of that season's sailing vessels, the *Emerald Isle*, and in August Young explicitly mandated a commitment to steam in his instructions to new European Mission President Albert Carrington:

To enable our immigration to avail themselves of the healthiest portion or portions of the year for better withstanding the changes of habits, diet and climate, and for other good and sufficient reasons, we wish you to employ none but steamships. . . .¹⁰

Without committing themselves to it, the Mormons developed a symbiotic relationship with Guion and Company which gave that firm a de facto monopoly on Mormon shipping for twenty-five years. Early, the firm granted the Mormon mission officials as passenger agents a 7½ percent commission on fares. Mormon leaders liked Guion's arrangements for steerage passengers, who comprised the bulk of Latter-day Saint emigrants. Although cartel prices of £6.6.0 per adult steerage passenger held firm for several years, Guion proved willing to meet or better any competition in accidental expenses like rail fare to Liverpool. Thus Mormon leaders often found it to their advantage to actively explore alternatives with other companies, but found themselves obtaining concessions from Guion rather than changing patronage. The favorable relationship worked to Guion's advantage as well since carrying steerage passengers yielded a relatively high profit margin.

In 1874 Joseph F. Smith, intent on obtaining a better bargain than his predecessors in the European Mission presidency, found a small American line outside the cartel which offered him slightly lower fares to Philadelphia than the cartel was charging to New York. George Ramsden, Guion's agent for passenger affairs, made a counter offer in order to retain the Mormons' business. Suddenly the transatlantic steamship conference came apart at the seams, and Smith concluded that Guion's abandonment of cartel prices in behalf of the Mormons had precipitated the breakup. Whether or not that was true, fares dropped by more than half to £3.0.0, and Smith figured his bargaining had resulted in a saving of more than fifteen thousand dollars to Mormon emigrants that year. Conference controls were reinstituted in late 1875, with the Latter-day Saints paying a fare of £5.0.0, but by 1879 a new pattern had emerged. Conference lines agreed to allow Guion to grant the Mormons fares below the agreed-upon minimum, on the condition that only Mormons would receive the low rates. Periodically Guion negotiated with the Mormons a low maximum rate, with the agreement that if cartel prices dropped below that the Mormons would be charged the lowest fare being quoted at the time of sailing.¹¹

⁹Brigham Young to Franklin D. Richards, May 23, 1868, Brigham Young Letterbooks, Church Archives.

¹⁰Brigham Young to Albert Carrington, August 14, 1868, Young Letterbooks.

¹¹Joseph F. Smith Diary, April–May 1874, Joseph F. Smith Papers, Church Archives. Joseph F. Smith to William W. Burton, August 13, 1874, and to Julina Smith, September 8, 1874, Joseph F. Smith Letterbook, microfilm, Church Archives. *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 36 (June 16,

Thus the Mormons' organized approach to emigration gave them substantial advantages. Their agreement held their fares as much as one-third lower than regular passengers when rates were relatively high. When fares were rock bottom they had little advantage. Less vulnerable to the effects of rate increases by the cartel, the Mormons were able to plan in an orderly way for the emigration of many families whose possibilities were marginal, even with financial help. In order to prevent Guion from undercutting them in the non-Mormon market, other firms insisted that the Mormons not obtain special rates for outsiders — a rule adhered to with varying strictness, especially when Mormons in Utah sent money for the emigration of non-Mormon friends to the West. Guion and Mormon mission president William Budge were embarrassed in 1879 when officials from the National Steamship Company came aboard a Guion ship and found an emphatically non-Mormon family who were being shipped as Mormons. This was a relatively rare exception, although persons sympathetic to the church, with relatives or friends in Utah, were rather frequently booked as Mormons.¹² While mission leaders sought to emigrate to Utah only persons who were favorable to the church, preferably faithful church members, it would be impossible to estimate the extent to which advantageous emigration fares influenced Europeans' inclinations to join or remain with the church.

Aside from lower fares, Mormons had other beneficial arrangements with Guion which varied from time to time. There was usually a passage broker's commission which could be applied to the reduction of fares or used to aid needy emigrants or pay mission expenses. Guion helped arrange group discounts for Mormon emigrants on railroads to Liverpool and superintended arrangements of shipping from the Continent to England, whether by their own line or by others. After 1878, when church president John Taylor directed that the fares of returning missionaries should be paid by the church, Guion usually allowed twelve missionaries free cabin passage for every 300 Mormon emigrants in a company. Additional returning missionaries received cabin passage for which a rate about equivalent to normal steerage fares was charged, to be taken from the church's profits on emigration transactions. The Mormons were also allowed to provide a number of stewards who, as part of the ship's crew, had free passage across the Atlantic.¹³

An added advantage was in the person of George Ramsden, Guion's passenger agent. "Brusque and gruff in his manners generally," wrote Anthon Lund, "he was always as gentle as a lamb to those who hailed from 42" (42 Islington, British Mission headquarters).¹⁴ Although the Mormon business was a relatively minor part of his clientele, Ramsden seemed anxious to do his best by them. He never tired of telling how British Mission President Franklin

1874):376. European Mission Passenger Lists, 1875, Church Archives. William Budge to Samuel Goddard, July 15, 1879, EM Letterbooks. Daniel H. Wells to Anthon H. Lund, March 3, 1885, and to James Jack, March 7, 1885, EM Letterbooks.

¹²William Budge to John Taylor, June 10, 1880, John Taylor Papers, Church Archives.

¹³William Budge to W. C. Staines, April 10, 1879; John Henry Smith to C. D. Fjeldsted, March 21, 1884; John Henry Smith to James Jack, May 8, 1884, all in EM Letterbooks.

¹⁴Anthon H. Lund to Franklin D. Richards, June 3, 1896, Anthon H. Lund Letterbooks, Church Archives.

Richards insisted in 1868 that Ramsden's word was good enough for him, and that no written agreement would be necessary as a basis for their relationship. While Ramsden avoided discussion of Mormonism's religious tenets, he respected the Mormons as a people, enjoyed doing business with them, and developed a warm personal relationship with several of them.¹⁵

Ramsden was aggressive in defense of the Mormons' travel arrangements. When a British railroad failed to give Mormons discount passes as Ramsden had requested, he promptly threatened to withdraw all Guion patronage of that railroad, and won compliance. He took occasion to speak favorably of the Mormons before meetings of shipowners and in contact with consular officials, representing them as honest, clean, orderly, intelligent, and certain not to become charges of the state once they reached America.¹⁶

American Secretary of State William Evarts sent a circular to his consuls in Europe in 1879 which gave rise to confusion about the American government's position with regard to Mormon immigration. Speculation had it that Evarts's intention was not only to discourage the departure of Mormons from European shores, but also to prohibit their landing in the United States. Ramsden and Guion continued to ship Latter-day Saints, despite a warning to Ramsden by Liverpool's chief of police that this might bring him into difficulty with the American government.¹⁷ The Mormons' gratitude for Ramsden's determined support was re-emphasized years later, at the time of his death, in the telling of an incident which supposedly took place during the tensions of 1879. According to Anthon H. Lund, Ramsden came aboard a Guion steamship just as a consul was tacking up notices that Mormons might not be admitted in American ports.

In a towering rage [Ramsden] commanded the Consul to pull down the notice. The latter said he was acting [on] order from the government. Ramsden replied that the government had nothing to do with his ships, and that he did not ask a passenger what his religion was. His strong stand saved our emigration from being stopped.¹⁸

The story may have been apocryphal, but it illustrated the kind of support the Mormons felt they had in Ramsden.

During the crisis over the Evarts circular, William H. Guion, a partner in the shipping line, interviewed Evarts and determined that Mormon emigration was not to be halted, but that the circular was intended to warn potential Mormon converts and emigrants that plural marriage was illegal in America and would be vigorously prosecuted.¹⁹

Guion and the Mormons fared less well in 1886 when Edmund Stephenson, a member of New York State's Board of Commissioners of Emigration, took up a personal crusade to prevent the landing of Mormon immigrants.

¹⁵Ibid. Anthon H. Lund to Heber J. Grant, March 22, 1905, Lund Letterbooks.

¹⁶William Budge to George H. Taylor, September 7, 1879; Daniel H. Wells to John Taylor and George Q. Cannon, September 1, 1886, EM Letterbooks. William Budge to John Taylor, October 16, 1880, Taylor Papers.

¹⁷William Budge to John Taylor, August 14, and October 18, 1879, Taylor Papers.

¹⁸Lund to Grant, March 22, 1905. See also Lund's obituary for George Ramsden, "A Good Friend Gone," *Millennial Star* 58 (June 14, 1896):360.

¹⁹William Budge to John Taylor, October 20, 1879, Taylor Papers.

While his opposition to Mormon immigration went beyond strictly legal considerations, Stephenson subjected all Mormons aboard three ships to intensive questioning, contending they were likely to become dependent upon the state for support. That year the board of commissioners detained more than sixty Latter-day Saints for various lengths of time, and deported one woman and three children. These four, however, were reshipped immediately by another steamship line from Liverpool to Baltimore. Apprehensive about further difficulties at New York, the Mormons sent their last company of the season to Philadelphia on the American Line's *British King*.²⁰ A directive from the acting secretary of the treasury ruled out discriminating against Mormon immigrants because of their religion, and, although the atmosphere continued tense, the Mormons resumed their business with Guion in 1887. Only one incident ensued that season. When a lame Icelandic Mormon woman was about to be detained, Guion's New York agent promptly offered the required \$500 bond to guarantee she would be cared for and taken to Utah.²¹

While steamship arrangements with Guion gave stability to Mormon emigration efforts, bargain hunting for railroad fares involved exploratory contacts with a dizzying variety of companies and frequent changes in routes. William C. Staines, the Mormon agent at New York, 1869–1881, was faced at times with two price-settling combinations. Rail agents at Castle Garden, the immigrant processing facility for New York, frequently agreed to enforce uniform prices for the route west, and the three major lines between Chicago and Omaha sometimes combined to eliminate competitive pricing. Adroitly and patiently maneuvering, Staines generally held adult fares to about fifty dollars New York to Ogden. While some church leaders preferred to rely on particular railroads like the Chicago and Northwestern, Staines felt no prior commitment to any, and sometimes avoided Chicago price-fixing by circumventing that hub, using such lines as the Toledo, Peoria and Warsaw Railroad and the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy. Staines traveled to Liverpool in 1869 to discuss with mission president Albert Carrington the possibility of shipping to Montreal via the Allen Line, and from there to Chicago by way of the Grand Trunk Railroad. His negotiations with Penn Central in 1873 paved the way for Joseph F. Smith's 1874 investigation of shipping to Philadelphia. Though neither of these major changes was carried out, vigilance proved useful in challenging Guion and the railroads to meet or outdo the competition, especially when special rates and not just low regular fares were the focus.²²

Overall, eastern railroads, with more competition and less insistence on quickly recouping initial investment, offered relatively attractive rates. On the western stretch it irked Brigham Young and the Mormons that the Union Pacific, which they had helped to build, seemed to give them cavalier treatment. In 1876, piqued by apparent UP pettiness and by the fact that it cost more to

²⁰*Millennial Star* 48(1886):475–76, 507, 568–70, 601–603, 619. James H. Hart to John Taylor, July 9, September 1 and 14, 1886, Taylor Papers. James E. Hart to John Taylor, July 24, 1886, Taylor Papers. Daniel H. Wells to James H. Hart, September 28, 1886, EM Letterbooks.

²¹*Millennial Star* 48(1886):734–36. George Teasdale to N. C. Flygare, August 5, 1887, EM Letterbooks. Teasdale to Wilford Woodruff, February 25, 1888, EM Letterbooks.

²²William C. Staines to Brigham Young, June 17, and August 1, 1869, June 6, 1872, June 21, 1873, March 8, and June 7, 1876, Young Papers.

take passengers and freight from Omaha to Salt Lake City than to the Pacific Coast, Young publicly explored other alternatives. He calculated that other railroads between New York and Omaha charged the Latter-day Saints \$.90 to \$1.00 per hundred passenger miles, while the Union Pacific charged them \$3.50. The fact that missionaries paid half fare was hardly a comfort. Young let it be known that he was investigating at least two proposals: (1) That the practice of sending wagons from Utah to Omaha to meet incoming immigrants be resumed, and, more seriously, (2) that immigrants be routed through other railroads into Colorado and be encouraged to settle in new Mormon colonies in Arizona or between there and the railroad terminus in Colorado.²³ He also hoped the Texas and Pacific Railroad, rival of Southern Pacific in the race to provide a southern transcontinental route, would consider the Mormons as potential customers.²⁴

Young was slightly ahead of his time. Unable to get better rates than those offered by Union Pacific, he backed off within two months.²⁵ By the mid-1880s Southern Pacific and, more significantly, the Denver and Rio Grande, would offer alternatives to Union Pacific, and would carry a share of Mormon immigrant traffic. And briefly, in the mid-1880s, the Mormons would see immigration fares plummet to unprecedented lows.

In the wildly competitive days before the Interstate Railway Act of 1887, rate wars made bargain hunting particularly attractive. Mormon emigration agents were caught napping in 1884 by an obscure independent travel agent, a Mr. J. A. Petersen of Salt Lake City, who advertised a fare of \$63.00 from Liverpool to Salt Lake City, while the Mormons charged about \$72.50. In consternation they sought the secret of his advantage. In the meantime they complained that his emigrants were sponging off the Mormon system. They generally traveled on the same ships and had the benefit of the Mormons' organization on board, including the leadership and guidance of returning missionaries, for whose fare the official Mormon emigrants were actually paying. On the other hand, in the United States they traveled by different railroads, thus lacking the aid of missionaries as interpreters and guides, and Mormon officials concluded that Petersen's predominantly Scandinavian clientele would therefore be subject to numerous inconveniences, pawns for the unscrupulous who preyed on immigrants.²⁶

Investigating their own possibilities, the Mormons found themselves in the middle of rate reductions on both sea and land. Concessions were made when they pressed for them. As a result, the last two companies of 1884 had the advantage of an unprecedented low rate of \$48 from Liverpool to Salt Lake City. The competition took an almost ridiculous turn in June 1885. By then Petersen was advertising fares from Copenhagen to Salt Lake City for \$52.50.

²³George Reynolds to W. C. Staines, January 21, 1876; Brigham Young to George Q. Cannon, January 24, 1876; Brigham Young to Albert Carrington, February 5, and February 24, 1876, Young Letterbooks.

²⁴Young to Cannon, January 24, 1876, Young Letterbooks.

²⁵Brigham Young to Albert Carrington, March 27, 1876, Young Letterbooks.

²⁶John Henry Smith to Anthon H. Lund, July 25, 1884; to James H. Hart, August 7, 1884; to Anthon H. Lund, September 23, 1884; Daniel H. Wells to Anthon H. Lund, March 3, 1885, all in EM Letterbooks.

Mormons arranged the same trip — via Liverpool — for only \$52. Britishers, without the travel from Copenhagen to Liverpool, had to pay eighty cents more under the official Mormon system than their Scandinavian counterparts.²⁷ However, these rates were dependent upon such bargains as a fare of \$1 from New York to Chicago — standard fare was about \$13 — and a total railroad fare of only \$32. The railroad rate increased within the week, but shipowners agreed on a rock bottom fare of £3 — less than \$15 — Liverpool to New York.²⁸

Still in pursuit of low rates, Mormon agent James H. Hart in New York found himself the next year, 1886, trying to elude the price rises being promoted by a voluntary Railway Commission Pool. At the same time he was concerned about the crackdown on Mormon immigrants at New York. He pressed for adopting Baltimore as the port of entry, citing advantageous rail rates from that port. British Mission President Daniel Wells and his successor George Teasdale warned against the capriciousness of sweeping rearrangements undertaken to obtain lowest prices. They also argued that officials were just as likely to deal harshly with Mormon immigrants at other ports as at New York, and that in view of the highly favorable orientation of Guion and Ramsden it was to the Mormons' advantage to maintain ties to the steamship company.²⁹

With the passage of the Interstate Railway Act in 1887, extraordinary bargains became more difficult to obtain and rates saw a general increase. The British Mission resumed arrangements with Guion, and Hart managed to shave \$7 from the new regular rates from New York to Salt Lake City by shipping immigrants from New York to Norfolk, Virginia, on Old Dominion Line steamships, then taking the Norfolk and Western Railway to Bristol, Tennessee, and proceeding by way of Chattanooga, Memphis, and Kansas City. Although fares from New York were still \$5 higher than the previous year, things might have been worse.³⁰

Fluctuation in emigration fares during the early steam era largely reflected four major changes in prices. First, in 1870 the dollar rose about 20 percent against the pound, so rail fare in pounds increased. Second, the transatlantic shipping conference held fares high until 1874, when the combination broke up. The conference established more moderate controls in late 1875–77. Third, the Mormons benefited from special reduced rate arrangements with Guion, 1878–87, and from low competitive sea fares in late 1884 and 1885. Finally, rate wars in 1885–86 preceded the Interstate Railway Act, which then tended to increase prices. (See Graph 1)

In the beginning, Mormon agents had viewed Mr. Petersen's travel agency

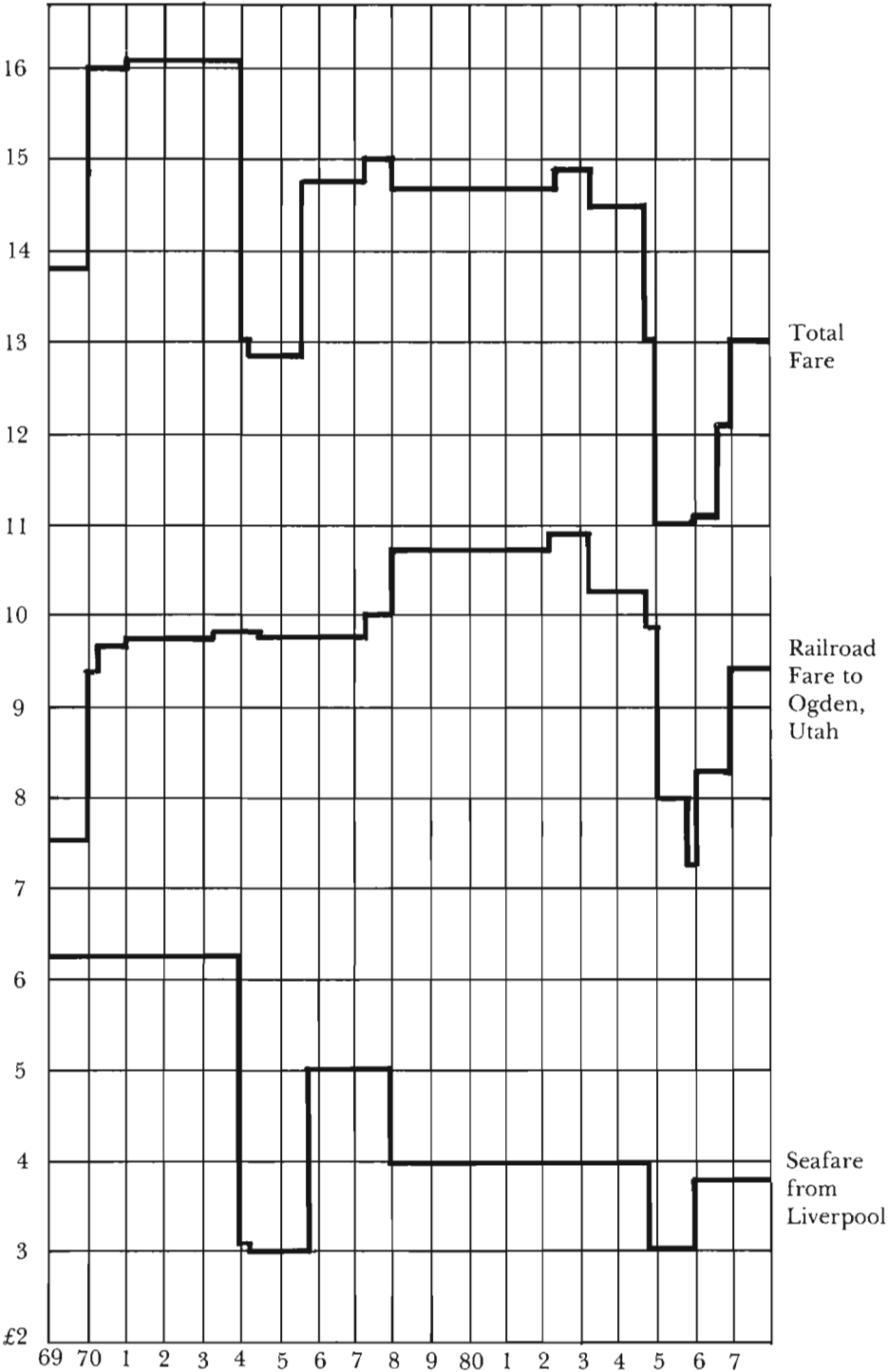
²⁷Daniel H. Wells to James H. Hart, February 24, 1885; Daniel H. Wells to James H. Hart, June 6, 1885, EM Letterbooks.

²⁸Daniel H. Wells to Anthon H. Lund, May 30, 1885; Daniel H. Wells to George Ramsden, June 11, 1885; Daniel H. Wells to James Jack, August 13, 1885, EM Letterbooks.

²⁹James H. Hart to John Taylor, May 27, June 4 and 17, July 3, 15, and 27, 1886, Taylor Papers. Daniel H. Wells to James H. Hart, July 20, 1886; Daniel H. Wells to John Taylor and George Q. Cannon, January 27, 1887; George Teasdale to John Taylor, February 17, 1887 and to James H. Hart, February 24, 1887, EM Letterbooks.

³⁰George Teasdale to N. C. Flygare, April 5, 1887, EM Letterbooks.

³¹John Henry Smith to Anthon H. Lund, September 23, 1884, EM Letterbooks.



as a troublesome but transitory annoyance, one that might “bust up” at any time.³¹ However, Petersen persisted into the 1890s, despite repeated admonitions to Scandinavian Latter-day Saints in Utah that his prepaid tickets would only prove to be a handicap to friends and relatives for whom they were purchased. Petersen demonstrated that American travel agents received special incentives for European travel. And, with improved telecommunications, travel could be effectively arranged in Salt Lake City — a point not lost on the church. Its New York travel agency, maintained for decades in a hostile environment, was closed after the 1887 immigration season in favor of the office of Church Transportation Agent in Salt Lake City. James H. Hart’s careful management had netted the church average profits of over ten thousand dollars per year for six years — after free fares were provided for returning missionaries. These profits were then available to cover the cost of immigrant rail fares Utah people had paid for at Salt Lake City. This freed up an equivalent amount for church aid to immigrants or other use. Hart was now relieved of his yearly commuting from Bloomington, Idaho, to New York each immigration season.³² Now only returning missionaries could help smooth the way for immigrants at the port of entry; but with a dwindling number of immigrants, that had to suffice.

The New York agency had been responsible for crucial railroad negotiations, and for major shipping arrangements beginning in 1877. However, most arrangements for the emigrants themselves were made in Europe. The focal point of the operation was Liverpool, where hundreds of little dramas unfolded as attempts were made to fulfill the hope of “escaping” to Zion.

First were individuals’ efforts to pay part or all of their way to Zion. Personal savings, in the form of the Individual Emigrating Account, were maintained throughout this period. All prospective emigrants were encouraged to save what they could toward their deliverance by depositing with branch treasurers, who forwarded the funds through the conference to the mission office. There it was available for the individuals’ emigration expenses, and in the meantime could be drawn upon for other needs. At the end of 1868, with the dawning of the all-steam era, such individual savings at Liverpool stood at about twenty-seven thousand dollars, and by 1879 that had dwindled to about twelve thousand dollars.³³ Indications are that as those who were able to accumulate sufficient savings emigrated, there remained fewer candidates for emigration and they had fewer resources. Presumably, an increasing proportion of the emigrants had to rely upon outside help.³⁴

In earlier years, prospective emigrants were frequently encouraged to pay their fare to the American port of entry — perhaps \$20 or \$25 — and then earn enough in America to take them the rest of the way to Salt Lake City. Or, for perhaps \$40 per adult, they could make their way from Liverpool to the frontier outfitting point for the church teams, where they could arrange the remainder of their transportation by agreeing to reimburse the Perpetual

³²Edward L. Hart, *Mormon in Motion: The Life and Journals of James H. Hart, 1825–1906* . . . (Salt Lake City: Windsor Books, 1978), pp. 260–61.

³³Albert Carrington to Brigham Young, January 16, 1869, EM Letterbooks.

³⁴Taylor, *Expectations Westward*, p. 151.

Emigrating Fund. Now, however, with non-Mormon commercial transportation covering the entire route, cash was required in advance for the entire fare. Many were successful in acquiring the needed cash; for some it was a difficult undertaking. "I have both rejoiced and wept," wrote mission president Albert Carrington, "when I have seen the little children of the very poor depositing their pennies toward their escape to the land of Zion..."³⁵

Families in financial distress occasionally withdrew funds from their emigration savings in order to make ends meet. Typical of the response was the reaction of mission president William Budge, sending a postal order for £1.0.9 to a brother in Bradford in 1879: "I am very sorry that circumstances should compel you to withdraw your emigration funds and trust that with the blessings of the Lord, you will soon be able to replace them."³⁶

Occasionally families unable to save as effectively as they might have liked were encouraged to send a family member — perhaps a father who could hopefully earn money in Zion, or perhaps a child, as an added incentive to work toward emigration for the rest of the family. Henry Naisbitt wrote the words for a song, "The Mormon Lad," published in the *Juvenile Instructor* in 1877, that celebrated this phenomenon. The young boy hears "the priesthood calling," knows that his time has come to emigrate to Zion, and promises his parents, "Soon I hope by industry / To aid you both from Bab'lon's shore." Although the boy is sadly missed, with his help, within a year, "The 'old folks' dare the ocean's roar, / To meet their faithful lad, and proudly stand / In Zion soon — hurrah 'tis o'er."³⁷

In another study, Gordon Irving and I found little or no correlation for a group of 1863 British emigrants between socioeconomic status and the length of time one was a church member before emigrating. The suggestion seemed to be that consumption and expenses tended to keep pace with available resources as much for those with better-paying employment as for those who were not well paid.³⁸ At any rate, the savings accounts administered by the missions continued to play a significant role in promoting emigration.

Regardless of the size of one's savings account, there could be hope if help from Zion was available. Some drives for donations to the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company were more successful than others. The campaign which began in autumn 1867 and continued into 1869 was one of the most encouraging. Reluctantly, with the encouragement of Bishop Edward Hunter, Brigham Young agreed to accept cattle and grain, as well as cash, for PEF donations. Because of the difficulty of converting cattle to cash, the general rule had been that stock and grain would be accepted as repayment of individual indebtedness to the PEF but not as donations. Repayment was usually problematic and needed to be rendered as feasible as possible; donations, on the other hand, must be usable for the purpose for which they were given. This campaign

³⁵Albert Carrington to Brigham Young, November 6, 1868, EM Letterbooks.

³⁶William Budge to David Green, August 19, 1879, EM Letterbooks.

³⁷"The 'Mormon' Lad," *Juvenile Instructor* 12 (1877):96.

³⁸Richard L. Jensen and Gordon Irving, "British Mormon Emigrants on the Ship *Amazon*, 1863: A Computer-Assisted Study," paper presented at annual meeting of Pacific Coast Branch, American Historical Association, San Francisco, August 19, 1978, pp. 32–33.

netted about one hundred and twenty-two thousand dollars in contributions, mostly in kind. Because the Union Pacific Railroad had paid Brigham Young only a fraction of what it owed for Mormon work on its roadbed in 1868–69, cash contributions lagged far behind expectations, although undoubtedly much of the cash donated at this time stemmed from railroad income.³⁹ Brigham Young hinted that if Great Basin Mormons applied themselves they could bring all those from the British Mission who wished to emigrate, and the rumor spread that he actually wished to see that accomplished and the mission closed.⁴⁰ Although that was not a realistic possibility, the idea itself served to motivate prospective emigrants.

The emigration of 1869 owed some of its magnitude to a misunderstanding about the use of PEF funds. That year Albert Carrington, a new mission president in England, received \$25,000 from Brigham Young, which would have paid emigration expenses for a long list of PEF emigrants whose names Young intended to send afterwards. Elder Carrington interpreted some of the President's remarks at April conference to mean that funds would be made available that year for at-large PEF emigrants, selected in the missions rather than nominated by friends or relatives in Utah and sent for by President Young. On the other hand, Carrington must have been aware that he could probably expect Young to order at least a few emigrants of his own choosing sent. But as Carrington studied his emigration preparations for the season he entirely failed to consider the possibility that further directions for the use of the money would be forthcoming. Thus he had conference presidents select enough of the worthy poor church members of long standing to use all but about one thousand dollars of these funds, and sent the emigrants steaming off for America before he received the long list from Salt Lake City. In retrospect he suggested that perhaps the Lord had made him do it because certainly he would not otherwise have expected such behavior of himself.⁴¹

President Young, who by now was hard pressed by the failure of the Union Pacific Railroad to pay him for his construction of their roadbed, and by the need of his workers for hundreds of thousand of dollars in pay, pointedly let Carrington know how far he had exceeded his instructions. He authorized Carrington to borrow if necessary to cover the expenses of the emigrants Young had ordered out — and they must be sent out. Then, recognizing that the mistake was irretrievable, he wrote: "I will do all that I can to help you out, and I do not wish you to worry your mind about it, as all will be right."⁴² As a result of these excesses of the heart there were virtually no PEF funds for the following year.

³⁹Brigham Young Address, April 8, 1869, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–1886; reprinted, 1967), 13:30. Brigham Young to Albert Carrington, September 14, 1869, Young Letterbooks. Minutes of Meeting of Bishops with Presiding Bishop Edward Hunter, November 21, 1867, Church Archives. Brigham Young to F. D. Richards, January 7, 1868. Young Letterbooks.

⁴⁰Taylor, *Expectations Westward*. p. 29.

⁴¹Albert Carrington to Brigham Young, August 26, 1869, Young Papers. Brigham Young to Albert Carrington, September 14, and October 16, 1869, Young Letterbooks.

⁴²Brigham Young to Albert Carrington, August 24, and September 14, 1869, Young Letterbooks.

Although in 1868, 1869, 1872 and 1880 local mission leaders had the opportunity to select a proportion of those who received PEF assistance to emigrate from Europe, these were exceptions. The general rule for most of the early steam era was that the president of the PEF, in Salt Lake City, was responsible for deciding who should receive the benefit of company funds. Thus there was a strong tendency for the fund to benefit those who had friends or relatives in Utah, who then could plead their case with the president of the company. Generally, donors of substantial sums were allowed to designate recipients. In later years one's chances for PEF aid were considerably improved if one had a friend or relative who could give the company security for repayment, thus theoretically insuring prompt replacement of the funds so they might be used for the next season's emigration.

Additional drives for PEF donations took place in 1873–74 and 1876, and of course further contributions were welcomed whenever they were made. Organizations frequently pooled their members' small gifts to make more substantial group donations. Ward or stake Primaries or Relief Societies sent money from year to year for the emigration of orphans or of poor children; some organizations paid for the emigration of a number of brothers and sisters. Benefiting from trade with nearby mining communities, Mormons in Panaca and Eagleville, Nevada, contributed conspicuous sums of gold dust and coin in the 1870s. In all, a total of about sixty thousand dollars in cash was donated to the fund in the period 1869–1886.⁴³

The Perpetual Emigrating Fund helped bring from Europe families totaling more than one hundred persons in each of the years 1869, 1871–75, and 1878–81.⁴⁴ That so many could be helped with relatively little cash was due to several techniques for maximizing the effect of the PEF funds expended. A typical notification that PEF aid would be available to an emigrant family in 1879 indicated, "You are expected to do what you can towards paying your passage and the P.E.F. will do the rest."⁴⁵ Occasionally the PEF authorized the use of specific amounts of money for a portion of the fares of particular individuals or families. Many PEF emigrants were able to pay a significant part of the total fare, thus making PEF funds go further. PEF emigrants were asked to respond promptly, telling whether they could leave with the next company or would require more time, and reports were submitted to Salt Lake City detailing the conditions of those who did not avail themselves of the aid they had been offered in a given year. Thus, while cash contributions in the period 1869–1886 might theoretically have paid less than a thousand adult fares, they benefited family groups totaling about three thousand individuals.⁴⁶

⁴³Cash Donation Book, 1869–1886, Perpetual Emigrating Fund Papers, Church Archives. Several large individual contributions which were not listed with these donations may also have been in cash. These included donations by Brigham Young.

⁴⁴Based on an analysis of European Mission Passenger Lists, Church Archives and PEF Ledgers, PEF Papers.

⁴⁵William Budge to Frederick Bentley, July 18, 1879, in EM Letterbooks.

⁴⁶Based on an analysis of European Mission Passenger Lists, 1869–1886, Church Archives. When records indicate that all or part of the emigration expenses for a particular traveling group came from a particular source, I have counted all members of the group as beneficiaries of that aid. Most traveling groups consisted of members of an immediate family. Extended families with separate arrangements for payment are classified here as separate traveling groups.

The Perpetual Emigrating Fund's dual nature as a charitable enterprise and a business seeking repayment of loans is illustrated in the emigration of Henry Webb, an orphan boy. In 1884 the British Mission received orders to emigrate Henry and his sister, who were to live with their step-grandmother in Manti, Utah. Missionaries paid a woman who had been caring for Henry, and were instructed to keep track of his transportation expenses to Liverpool, so those could be added to the regular emigration expenses on the note he was to sign. When he reached Liverpool it became apparent that he was too young to sign the note. Nevertheless, the PEF was to keep track of the expenses, and hopefully the company would be repaid sometime. Incidentally, his sister Emily lived at an orphanage, and authorities there declined to allow her to emigrate because there existed no direct relationship between the girl and her step-grandmother.⁴⁷

While the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company deserves attention as a manifestation of organized effort to help emigrants, aid given through that source was eclipsed for the period we are considering by individual assistance, which assumed a variety of other forms. Most typical was the payment of cash at church offices in Salt Lake City for a church draft to be used by parties in Europe for emigration. A typical notification sent by the Liverpool office in 1884 reads:

Phebe Clark

Stonewick, Near Highams Fences

Northamptonshire

Dear Miss. George Clark of Utah has sent Church Draft No. 12 of September 17, 1884 for £4.8.0 to be used only for your emigration. Are you a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? Can you [go] with the Company Oct. 25 inst.? What is your age? Please reply and find circular [giving details of procedures for emigrants] enclosed.

Yours Faithfully,

John Henry Smith.⁴⁸

George Clark had emigrated only that June, and was able to send a draft for £4.8.0 — about \$21.00 — this soon afterwards. Months later he sent an additional draft for £24.9.9 — about \$119.00, enabling his wife, Phoebe, to leave Liverpool with three small children and a relative in the first Latter-day Saint emigrant company of 1885.⁴⁹

During most of this early steam era between 20 and 50 percent of Mormon emigrants benefited from some kind of aid to cover emigration expenses. A higher proportion of British emigrants generally received help than did the other large category of emigrants, Scandinavians. Since British Mormon emigration had begun twelve years earlier than Scandinavian, British immigrants in the Mountain West had a more substantial base from which to assist friends and relatives. Moreover, church members of long standing in Great Britain were generally deemed more appropriate recipients of church aid than more recent Scandinavian converts. During the years 1869–1885, 29.8 percent

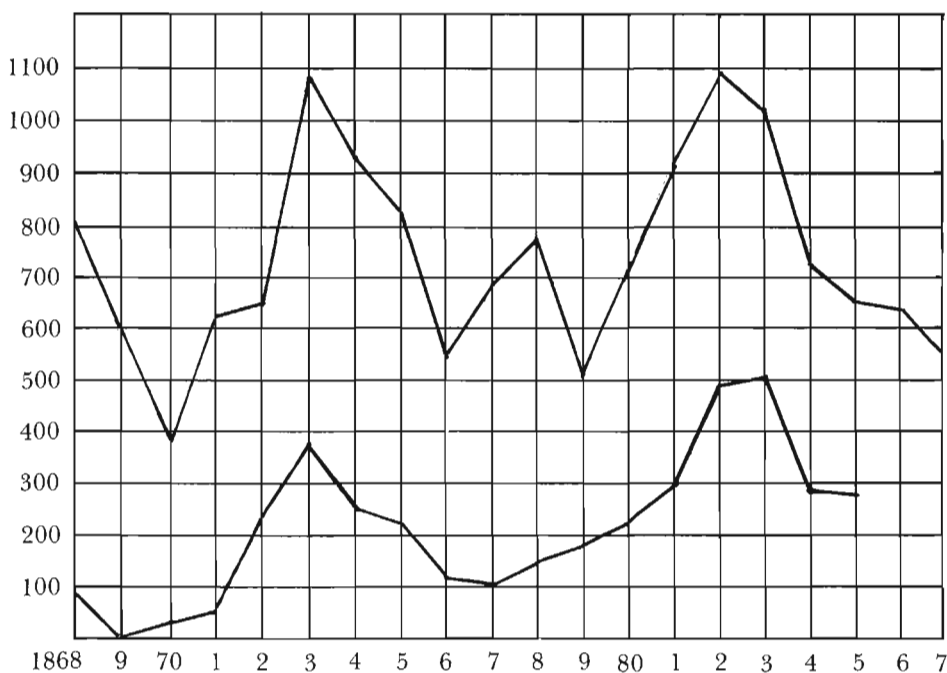
⁴⁷EM Letterbooks, 1884–1885.

⁴⁸John Henry Smith to Phebe Clark, October 3, 1884, EM Letterbooks.

⁴⁹European Mission Passenger Lists, 1885. Family Group Sheets for George Clark, Library, Genealogical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

of Scandinavian Mormon emigrants benefited from some sort of identifiable aid. The Perpetual Emigrating Fund was only a significant factor in the years 1872–1876, when it helped 318, or 7.9 percent of the emigrants departing from Scandinavia. During those same years private funds in the form of church drafts helped 21.8 percent. The highest proportion of Scandinavian emigrants to receive help was in 1883, when 507 — 49.9 percent of them — benefited from documented aid. This aid was almost entirely in the form of church drafts; three persons received postal orders. (See Graph 2) That same year 659, or 56.9 percent of British emigrants received aid, with 49.2 percent helped by drafts and other private arrangements and 8.9 percent by PEF or other church help. Some had both private and Church help. Of the British, 19.5 percent drew from savings accounts.⁵⁰

Relatives and friends frequently sent payment for emigrants' railroad fares to the Mormon agent at New York, rather than to Europe. Thus an even higher proportion of emigrants received private aid than indicated above. In addition, the New York agent was sometimes called upon to provide financial help to emigrants who otherwise would have been stranded in New York. In 1869 William Staines learned that about two hundred Scandinavian Mormons had supposedly expected money for their rail fares to be sent to New York by



Graph 2: Latter-day Saint Emigrants from Scandinavia, 1868–1887;
those for whom aid for travel expenses was recorded, 1868–1885.

⁵⁰Based on analysis of Scandinavian Mission Passenger Lists, 1869–1885, and European Mission Passenger Lists, 1869–1886, Church Archives. Church drafts, which were officially recommended as the best method for sending private aid, are here presumed to have far outweighed undocumented forms of aid sent directly to prospective emigrants.

friends and relatives. The money did not arrive, and Staines sent them to Utah on the railroad. They signed agreements to repay their borrowed fares after arrival in Utah. In all, Staines expended more than six thousand dollars to assist about three hundred persons with railroad fares that year.⁵¹

When individuals or organizations sent funds outside the PEF for the emigration of specific European Latter-day Saints they were at liberty to arrange for repayment if they wished, or to give the funds as a gift. While it is impossible to know exactly what arrangements were made privately, some clearly attempted to establish miniature Perpetual Emigrating Funds of their own, in that they asked the European Mission to make it clear that they wished for repayment as soon as possible so that they might repeat the use of the same money to emigrate additional people in the future. Among such donors was Sarah M. Kimball of Salt Lake City, presumably in her capacity as a ward Relief Society president.⁵²

While instructions for emigration with the use of PEF funds and church drafts were usually quite precise and had to be followed exactly, they often failed to provide for exigencies. Had Salt Lake City not known that a particular family now had an additional child whose fare must also be paid? Was the prospective emigrant unable to come up with cash for the train fare to Liverpool? Did he lack the necessary \$4 to pay the cost of eating utensils and of provisions for the railroad trip from New York to Salt Lake City? During most of the steam era modest profits earned by the Mormon passage brokerage were available for the use of the mission president, at his discretion, to cover such emergencies. As with PEF funds, these monies were accounted for precisely, and individuals signed notes agreeing to repay the amount loaned to the Trustee-in-Trust rather than the PEF Company. This added a touch of humanity and flexibility to the emigration efforts which by and large had to be operated like a business, not a giveaway.

Official records show a few instances of contract labor agreements which provided emigration expenses for the workers. Occasionally farm owners made arrangements through the mission president for farm laborers who would agree to work for a specific length of time, usually one year, in return for their emigration, and would receive modest wages at a rate agreed upon prior to emigrating. Undoubtedly many more such arrangements were made privately, often for relatives or friends of American missionaries who were willing to help someone emigrate in return for inexpensive labor.⁵³

Simon Bamberger, a non-Mormon and later governor of Utah, helped arrange contract labor emigration in 1880 for the production of coke, an enterprise in which he was involved in south-central Utah. With the permission of British Mission President William Budge, Bamberger had a mission clerk make inquiries through conference presidents for coalwashers, cokeburners, and coke oven masons. Five men were promptly located and sent to Sanpete County, where they agreed to work for a year, to receive wages of \$2.50 per

⁵¹W. C. Staines to Brigham Young, August 1, and October 3, 1869, Young Papers.

⁵²John Henry Smith to Sarah M. Kimball, June 17, 1884, in EM Letterbooks.

⁵³John Henry Smith to Ezra T. Clark, April 4, 1883; John Henry Smith to John Cartwright, July 11, 1884; William Budge to Lorenzo Pettit, May 22, 1879, EM Letterbooks.

day, and to have the expenses of their emigration deducted from their earnings. The workers had the mission clerk to thank for the fact that they were offered \$2.50 per day, rather than \$1.50, which Bamberger had initially suggested.⁵⁴

The prospect of marriage provided another basis for funding of individual emigration. In 1884 a gentleman in Parowan, Utah, requested British Mission President John Henry Smith to help him find a wife, offering to pay for her emigration. Smith took pleasure in facilitating the arrangement. The man was to send his photograph and a recommend signed by his bishop. Smith made inquiries and located an eighteen-year-old prospect in Nottingham, "a very nice young Lady so her friends and acquaintances say." After seeing the gentleman's photograph she consented to go to Utah, and her photograph was sent to him. He was to repay the Trustee-in-Trust for her emigration, but the matter of marriage was to be settled between them. If they did not marry, the young woman was to repay the man as soon as she could earn the money. Smith reassured him, however, that after seeing the girl

I feel almost certain that you will both be pleased and that all will be for the best. I make no charge for my services in this matter and will be amply paid if you prove to this young woman a good kind and considerate husband and she to you a faithful and loving wife.⁵⁵

Smith promised to keep confidential the fact that he had helped arrange this, and nothing is known about the outcome after the young woman stepped off the train at Milford, Utah.

British Mission records show other instances of offers to pay for the emigration of prospective wives, but these were generally persons who had known the donors previously and whose decision to accept the help offered would have been tantamount to agreeing to marry. That the question of sending for prospective spouses should arise in a fairly extensive emigration system seems natural. Perhaps the fact that it is mentioned only occasionally tells us something about Mormon marriage arrangements. Presumably, people preferred to make their own arrangements through private correspondence, rather than through official channels.

The early steam era, from 1869 to 1887, saw a total of about thirty-three thousand Latter-day Saints emigrate from Europe, an average of about 1,740 per year. The previous twenty-nine years of Mormon emigration yielded a total of about fifty thousand six hundred, a nearly identical average of about 1,743 per year.⁵⁶ (See Graph 3) While the level of Mormon emigration fluctuated wildly in the nineteenth century, yearly variations were slightly less pronounced in the steam era. Mormon resources were overextended to promote

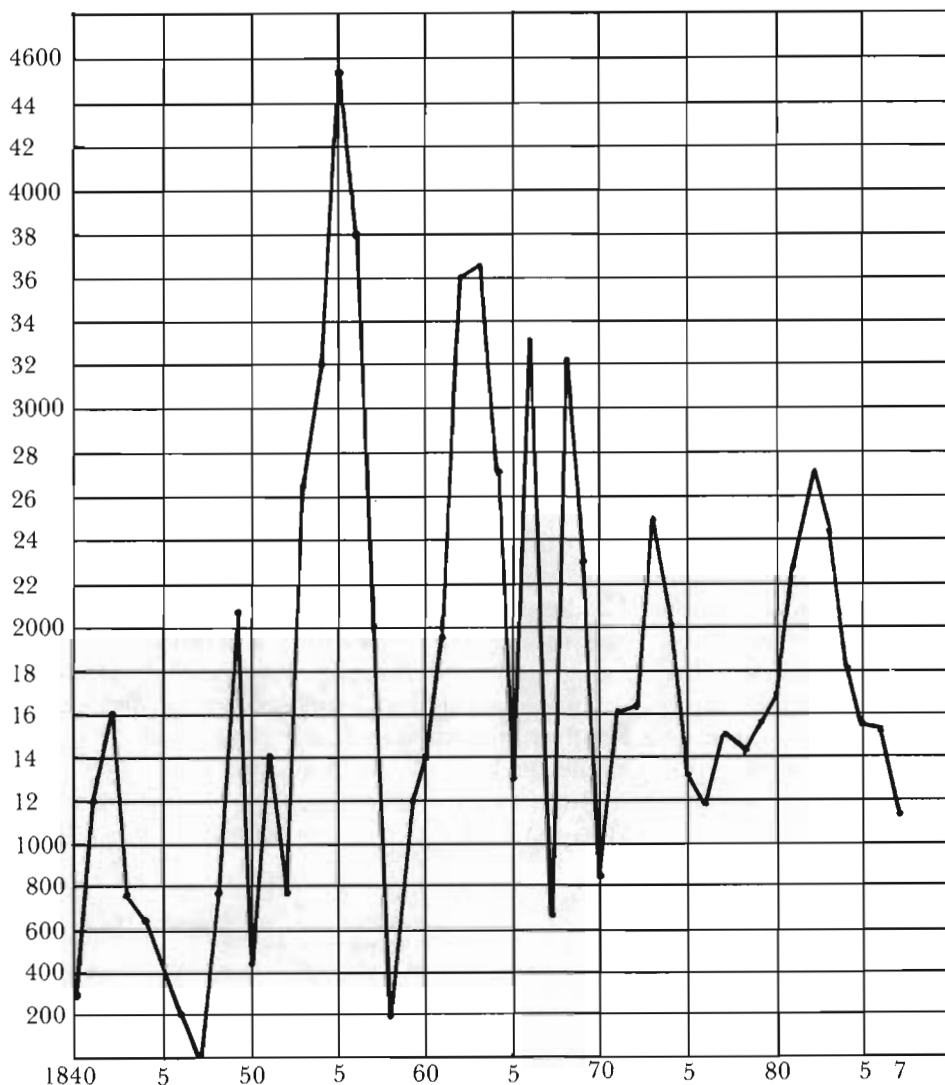
⁵⁴EM Letterbooks, 1880. The rather extensive correspondence on this matter begins with Francis Cope to S. Bamberger, March 25, 1880, and continues into May 1880.

⁵⁵John Henry Smith correspondence, August 22–November 12, 1884, EM Letterbooks. The young woman's expenses, to be repaid by the prospective husband, were borrowed from emigration profits.

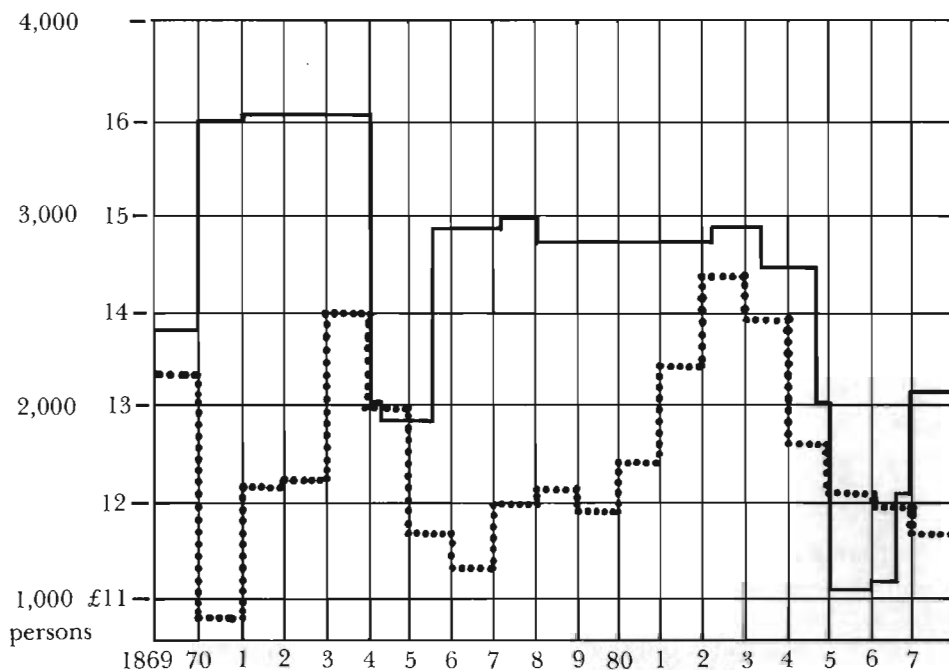
⁵⁶Based on figures in European Mission Passenger Lists, reports of departing emigrant companies in *Millennial Star*, annual reports in *ibid.*, and Andrew Jensen's information about 1840–1868 emigrant companies in *Heart Throbs of the West*, comp. Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City, Utah; Daughters of Utah Pioneers) 12 (1951):463–65.

the emigration of 1868–1869, and the aftermath was a marked decline in 1870–1871. After that, variations tended increasingly to reflect international economic conditions rather than changes in Mormon emigration policies. The Panic of 1873; the ensuing depression, coupled with declining prices for British industry; recovery peaking in the early 1880s; and economic difficulties of the mid-80s were all graphically reflected in Mormon emigration patterns of the period.

The relationship between cost of transportation and the number of Mormons to emigrate is more difficult to suggest. (See Graph 4) Peaks in LDS emigration in 1873 and 1882 came when fares were relatively high, at times of relative prosperity. On the other hand, low fares in 1874 and 1885–1886 may have enabled marginal people to emigrate even at times of relative economic



Graph 3: Latter-day Saint Emigrants from Europe, 1840–1887.



Graph 4: Adult Mormon Emigrant Fares from Liverpool, 1869–1887;
Mormon Emigrants from Europe, 1869–1887.

distress. The dramatic weakening of the pound sterling against the dollar in international exchange in 1870 put British emigrants at a disadvantage and, coupled with a decrease in aid sent from Utah, resulted in the most marked decline in LDS emigration for the period.

The conversion to steam changed the nature of the emigration experience considerably. The first all-steam company in 1869 made the trip from Liverpool to Ogden in a mere twenty-four days. A new record of seventeen days was set in 1877.⁵⁷ This was a different world from the years when emigrants would not reach the Salt Lake Valley until three to five months after departure. Gone were the days of tragically high mortality aboard ship, particularly among infants and children. By late 1872 mortality aboard steamships landing in the United States had been reduced to below that of the country as a whole, and less than one-twenty-fifth the mortality rate of sailing vessels in 1867.⁵⁸

Steam brought far greater flexibility in scheduling of departures. In early years, ice around Scandinavian ports had precluded departures before late March or early April, and the danger of early snows in the Rocky Mountains made it risky to embark after May. Later departures meant a winter layover east of the Mississippi. Hectic preparations for several large emigrant companies within a period of a few weeks sometimes seriously damaged the health

⁵⁷Brigham Young to George Nebeker, June 25, 1869; Brigham Young to Joseph F. Smith, July 17, 1877, Young Letterbooks.

⁵⁸Woodworth report in Abbot, ed., *Immigration* . . . , pp. 48–49.

of British Mission officials. Now the emigration season generally extended from April, May or June through October, with smaller groups occasionally departing at other times. The heaviest months for shipping were June and September. An early departure helped immigrants become well established in their new homes before winter set in. Autumn companies were best for those dependent on farming income or on aid sent during the summer. Varying conditions and the preferences of mission presidents influenced the size and frequency of emigrant companies, which averaged about three hundred per ship.

Reliance on the railroad instead of the Church teams for the final leg of the journey freed manpower, teams, wagons, and other resources for the building of temples and other community development. In earlier years, those who had helped bring home the immigrants had missed both planting time and harvest time.

For most of the years included in this study the cost of immigration was comparable to what it had been for more than a decade before the transition to steam was complete. For a brief period in 1885–1886 expenses for individual immigrants were very close to what they had been for the most drastic attempt to cut costs — the handcart experiment of nearly three decades earlier.⁵⁹ Those who purchased their own teams and wagons in the earlier days generally paid more for the journey, but then they had a very helpful investment when they reached Utah.

While steam travel was seldom significantly more expensive than the old way, it required cash in advance to cover the entire journey. That was a relatively scarce commodity among the Latter-day Saints, whereas labor and teams and wagons were not. Thus, in a sense it is difficult to compare the costs of the two systems.

For earlier immigrants the trip to Utah was both a religious pilgrimage and a trial of faith. The act of distancing oneself from Babylon by making the long and arduous trek must have been significant for individuals and for the Mormons as a people. In the steam era much of the effort centered around the accumulation, saving, and contribution of money — perhaps more difficult to invest with religious significance, but nevertheless a function of faith and charity.

But what happened when the destination was reached? In a sense, in the old days even the teamsters at the outfitting point had been the beginning of a welcoming to Zion. The wagons coming out to meet the immigrants with fruit and baked goods, and the throngs that met them as they arrived in Salt Lake City, had been a welcome part of the process of assimilation. In 1899 George Q. Cannon commented editorially that in the old days

Within a very few days even a large company was entirely absorbed into the community,

⁵⁹Based on analysis of fares listed in EM Letterbooks, 1884–85, Church Archives; and of 1856 Immigrants' Accounts, PEF Papers, Church Archives. Post Civil War inflation in the United States, followed by periods of economic depression in both the U.S. and Europe, would have affected the relative difficulty of saving for and paying emigrant fares. Nevertheless, U.S. cost-of-living indexes for 1884–85 were slightly higher than for 1856, tending to validate comparison of fares for those years. See U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington D.C., 1960), p. 127.

and the new-comers fairly started in their new life. Since the railroad came there has appeared to be less interest, as there has also been less hospitality toward our immigrants.⁶⁰

Now there was less opportunity for counseling about employment and housing, less initiation into the conditions and customs of the territory.

The disincorporation of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company in 1887 affected Mormon emigration only minimally, for the gradual transition to more individualistic aid to emigration was already nearly complete. Individual Latter-day Saints in the Mountain West continued to be an important source of aid for European emigrants. By the turn of the century emigration was deemphasized and occasionally discouraged by church officials. Mission leaders and missionaries largely abandoned the promotion of emigration, although with the continued flow of converts to America they maintained some of the "shepherding" arrangements that characterized Latter-day Saint emigration from its inception. Mormon emigration assumed a lower profile, becoming only a pale reflection of its early steam era, which was a time of relatively successful adjustment to new conditions. Steaming through to America in significant numbers in the last third of the nineteenth century was an achievement both for the second generation of Mormon pioneers and for their leaders.

⁶⁰George Q. Cannon editorial, "The True Spirit of Gathering," *Juvenile Instructor* 34 (1899):83.

NOTES, VIEWS, AND REVIEWS

The Editorial Staff wishes to announce that beginning with our tenth anniversary issue a new section will be added to the *Journal of Mormon History* titled "Notes, Views, and Reviews." The section will be used to publish brief notes or documents important to Mormon history, essays that may not fit a normal scholarly format, and reviews by senior scholars of major books or pathbreaking articles. We welcome submissions in these categories.

The “Leading Sisters”: A Female Hierarchy in Nineteenth Century Mormon Society

By Maureen Ursenbach Beecher

Mormon apostate writer John Hyde was accurate in his observation of an elite group in early Mormon Utah. He wrote in 1857:

Miss Eliza R. Snow, the Mormon poetess, a very talented woman, but outrageously bigoted, and one or two kindred souls, are the nuclei for all the female intellect at Salt Lake. Let any recant from their creed, or oppose it, she and her band of second Amazons crush the intrepid one down.¹

While Hyde may have exaggerated the vengeance of the ladies against non-conformists, he has suggested that a female elite existed among the early society of the Latter-day Saints, and illustrated some of its characteristics. It centered in one strong woman, charismatic, widely visible, powerful, and around that hub a select group of “kindred” women; it demanded of its members unstinting adherence to a “creed,” a spoken or otherwise understood set of tenets and behaviors. What Hyde missed in his intended castigation of Snow and her cohorts was that this elite group not only led out in matters intellectual, but ruled informally the whole society of Mormon women. Because of the nature of Mormonism — the all-pervasive reach of the radical theology — there was not an aspect of living which the religion did not touch,

Maureen Ursenbach Beecher is a Senior Research Historian at the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History and Associate Professor of English at Brigham Young University. An earlier version of this paper was read at the Pacific Coast Branch meeting of the American Historical Association, August 17, 1981. The author acknowledges helpful suggestions made there by commentator Carmon Hardy and others.

¹John Hyde, Jr., *Mormonism: Its Leaders and Designs* (New York: W. P. Fetridge & Company, 1857), pp. 127–28.

and the chief disseminator of the religion to the women was Eliza Roxcy Snow, termed by one historian, "the female voice of the male hierarchy."²

Historians of Mormon culture have long noted Snow's importance to the religious and secular life of the Great Basin Saints. What they have largely neglected is the group of women who performed for the female Saints functions parallel to those carried out for the whole membership by the general authorities assembled around Brigham Young. It is the purpose of this paper to examine that female elite individually and collectively and determine how they arose and where they fit in the Mormon social order.

In their impressive study of organizational patterns in the Mormon Church itself, Jill and Brooklyn Derr point out the differences between formal and informal power sources. Authority is conveyed, they assert, through formal organizations, such as wards, stakes, priesthood quorums, and, after the 1870s, Mutual Improvement Associations, Primaries, and Relief Societies. In all those formal bodies, the priesthood administration carries the decision-making power. Since in Mormon practice women hold no generally acknowledged priesthood authority, the formal structure shows them totally under the direction of their male leaders. Informal structures, on the other hand, also function in organizations, stimulating, facilitating, or interrupting the formal system when it proves inadequate to the need or counter to the best interests of the people it serves. It is in their use of informal methods, the Derrs demonstrate, that women have been most effective.³ The very founding of the Nauvoo Relief Society, from a chance conversation in a young woman's parlor, illustrates the informal undercurrent moving along with the mainstream as women bring about their own kind of changes in the system.

Titles and ranks make it easy to identify the key men in Joseph Smith's or Brigham Young's administrations. In the absence of such organization, it is less simple to name the women who were their equivalents in early church administration. For some periods there were Relief Society presidencies, but often there was no Relief Society, and equally often it was women other than the officially appointed ones who seem to have been directing women's activities. Close reading of minutes of women's meetings during Utah's later settlement days reveals several "leading sisters," visitors from Salt Lake City, whose words seemed to have the force of law to their sisters in the outer settlements. Unofficial in the sense of having no titles or conference-approved general boards, the visitors carried messages from headquarters, gave assignments, encouraged specific projects, and generally preserved the continuity and sense of community of the women. The purpose of this paper is to identify these "leading sisters," suggest how the group came to be composed of these particular women, and open the question of how they functioned in the church at large.

The first part of the question is readily answered: the list of "leading sisters" drawn from the minute books of the 1870s squares almost without

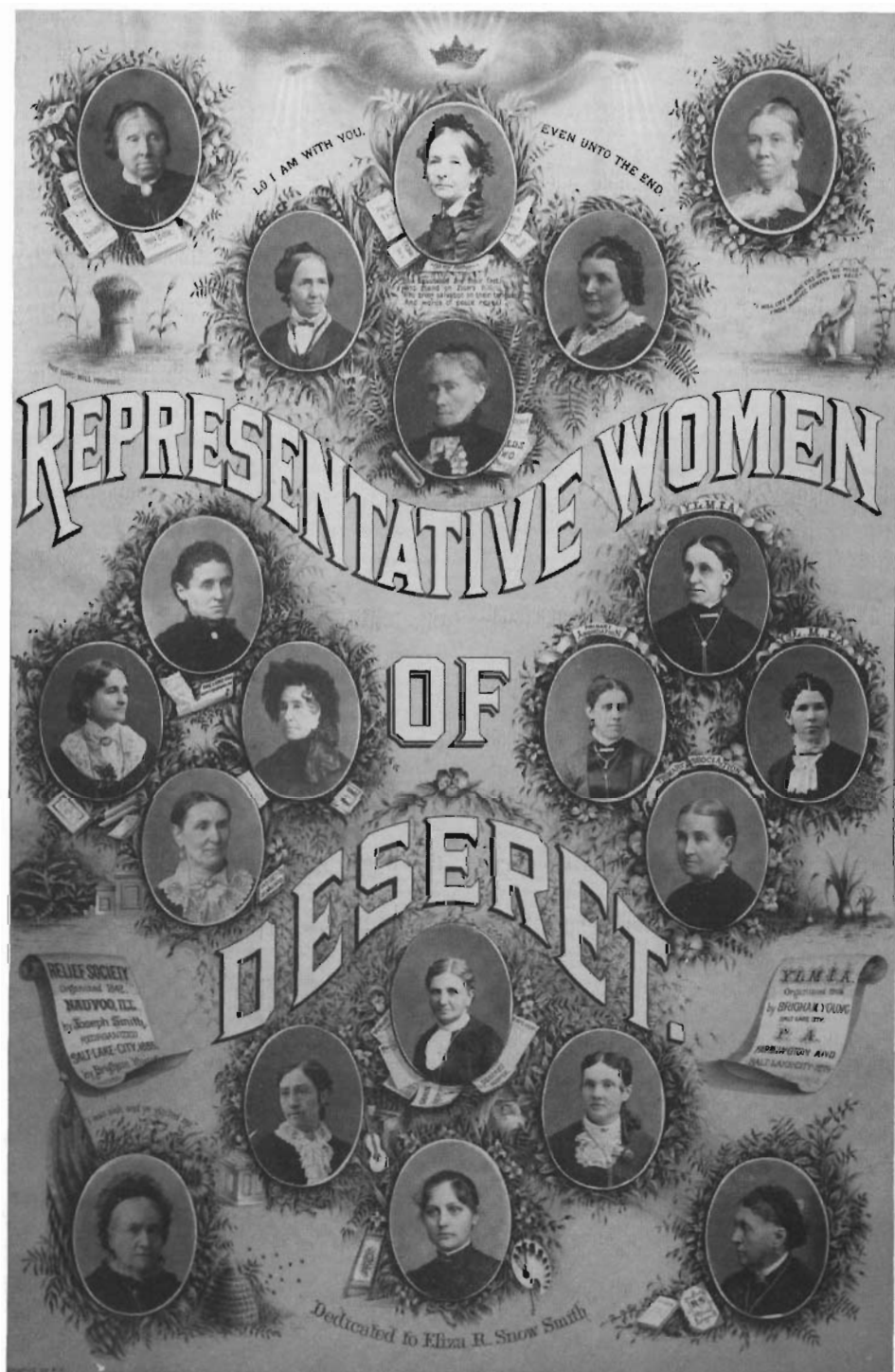
²Beverly Beeton, in conversation with the author, spring, 1975.

³Jill Mulvay Derr and C. Brooklyn Derr, "Outside the Mormon Hierarchy: Alternative Aspects of Institutional Power," MS in author's file. A revised form of the essay is soon to appear in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*.

exception with the key women listed by Augusta Joyce Crocheron in an 1884 publication entitled *Representative Women of Deseret*.⁴ The book, a compilation of brief biographies, was published to accompany a large composite photograph of twenty women. Crocheron's list is more representative of this elite than of the mainstream. Though she includes leaders of womens organizations, she has also selected some women not in the formal presidencies, and has left off some who were. Her list includes the following, grouped in five sections: 1. Eliza R. Snow [Smith], whom Crocheron titles "President of the Latter-day Saints' Women's Organizations"; Zina D. H. Young, first counselor; Mary Isabella Horne, treasurer (Crocheron neglects to title her with the more active calling, that of President of the Salt Lake Stake Relief Societies and, even more significantly, of the Cooperative Retrenchment Society, of which more will be said later); and Sarah M. Kimball, secretary (also Fifteenth Ward Relief Society president). These four were also the presidency of the 1880 Relief Society Central Board, counselor Elizabeth Ann Whitney, deceased since 1883, not having been replaced. The Relief Society Board and the presidency of Womens Organizations were composed of the same people, which suggests that the Relief Society was mother organization to the female-directed "auxiliaries," the MIA and Primary. 2. Around the four corners of the composite photograph, and next treated in the book, are four women who, not holding specific callings, still had to be included, according to Crocheron's sense of who was really important: Phoebe Woodruff, Bathsheba W. Smith, Prescendia [*sic*] Kimball, and Elizabeth Howard. These two groups, then, were the core women, the *leading* leading sisters. 3. The next group (middle right) formed a second echelon, represented by their less prominent position on the chart: Elmina S. Taylor, general president of the YLMIA, and Mary A. Freeze, her Salt Lake Stake counterpart; and Louie B. Felt, Primary president, and her stake counterpart Ellen C. Clawson. 4. The artists (middle left): Emily Hill Woodmansee, Hannah T. King, Helen Mar Whitney (these latter two noted among the women for far more than their verse and prose), and the author, Augusta Joyce Crocheron. 5. The professional women (lower center): Emmeline B. Wells, editor of the *Woman's Exponent*, and Romania B. Pratt, physician at the woman-sponsored Deseret Hospital, both a generation younger than the central group, are about to move into the upper echelon; Zina Young Williams, age thirty-four, and Louie Wells, twenty-two, are daughters of their illustrious mothers pictured, and are included, Crocheron writes, as suggesting the "rising generation" of leaders. Zina did rise to leadership stature; Louie died at age twenty-five.

That elite, both the inner core and its extensions to the local units and to the next generation, is worthy of study on several counts. Minute books and personal accounts, newspapers and magazines indicate that it was those "leading sisters" who interpreted the doctrines and set the behavioral standards for their sisters; they discovered worthy causes and organized effective social programs; they made alliances and identified enemies. The corporate and

⁴ Augusta Joyce Crocheron, *Representative Women of Deseret* (Salt Lake City: J.C. Graham & Co., 1884).



Photograph courtesy Arts and Sites Division, LDS Church Historical Department

often private lives of all Mormon women, however remote from the central Salt Lake Stake, were impacted by the doings and sayings of these few.

But how did such a group arise? How was its membership determined? What had these leading women in common? D. Michael Quinn, in his seminal dissertation "The Mormon Hierarchy, 1832–1932: An American Elite" found as the single most significant characteristic of the priesthood hierarchy their shared familial relationships.⁵ The female leaders, not surprisingly, derived much of their status from the men to whom they were connected. Of the central eight, six were wives of apostles or, in two instances, of the president of the church. Of the second echelon in Crocheron's configuration, another six were either wives or daughters (adopted, in one case) of general authorities.

Yet factors other than kinship helped determine membership in the female leadership group. The Mormon society which established itself in Utah took its forms from those that developed or were established in Nauvoo. There the most significant event affecting women was the founding, in 1842, of the Relief Society, an organization whose repeated demises and resurrections demand reinterpretation. It is often overlooked that, though the "official" founding of the organization took place March 17 in the Masonic Lodge room, the first Relief Society was actually a grass roots movement which earlier had brought together in Sarah Melissa Kimball's parlor a group of her neighbors with the purpose of providing aid to men working full time building the temple. In her own account Kimball, a very young but relatively wealthy matron, tells of her conversation with her seamstress, and of the meeting they called in the Kimballs' small house. After that first meeting Kimball requested of Eliza R. Snow, then a spinster known to be gifted in writing, a set of by-laws for the newly founded group.⁶ Snow then took her effort to Joseph Smith for his approval, expecting to present it to the group who were scheduled to meet the following Thursday.

Joseph Smith took the fledgling organization under his wing and created for it a place in the general priesthood organization of the church. Under his direction twenty women were invited to an official founding meeting two weeks after the first unofficial gathering. The twenty whose names appear in the minutes, and their circumstances, provide some insight into the pattern which would emerge of female networks among the Mormons.⁷

Analysis of the membership of the charter Relief Society meeting suggests two social-geographical bases for their having been invited: Sarah Kimball's friends from the first meeting, and those later invited for the March 17 meeting. In the absence of a contemporary list of those women who partici-

⁵D. Michael Quinn, "The Mormon Hierarchy, 1832–1932: An American Elite" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1976).

⁶"Sarah M. Kimball," *Representative Women*, pp. 26–27.

⁷Minutes of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, March 17, 1842, microfilm, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, hereinafter referred to as Church Archives. Of the twenty women listed, two names, Athalia Robinson and Nancy Rigdon have been stricken through, and subsequent histories of the Relief Society, based on a later typescript of the minutes, have listed only eighteen women as having attended. A likely explanation for the striking out is in the notion that when Saints left the main church, as these two daughters of Sidney Rigdon did, "their names were blotted out, that they were remembered no more among the people of God." Book of Mormon, Alma 1:24.

pated in the initial gathering in the Kimballs' parlor, we can only surmise that they would be Sarah's neighbors, women who lived within a short walk's distance of her home in old Commerce, the north-west sector of Nauvoo. The chart below suggests who of the March 17 group those might be. If the minute taker — Willard Richards, whose notes were later copied by Eliza R. Snow — listed the women in the order in which they were sitting, the idea is further supported, that those women who attended the Kimball meeting sat together, and those later added to their number likewise sat in groups.

The later additions, presumably Joseph Smith's own choice, were women who lived within four blocks of the Smith household, itself a block from the red brick store where the meeting took place. Many factors intrude here — Joseph Smith's acknowledged bent for housing his leading men and their families near his own house; the tendency of a leader to know and trust kinsmen of his co-workers; the probability that the wives of church leaders, having suffered the privations which proved their husbands, were likewise proven faithful. Those factors most likely had bearing on some of the women chosen for the first meeting. About half of this second group, however, is significant for their seeming obscurity: women with no familial attachment to leaders, who were at the time of the meeting, or had been in the recent past, boarders or servants in the Smith household, or dwellers on the Smith property. The census in process as the Relief Society was being organized reveals eleven people sharing the Homestead property with Joseph and Emma Smith and their family. Three of them were at the meeting.⁸

Those groups, then, with some overlap, made up the first meeting, the inner core around which 1400 Nauvoo women would rally in the two years to follow. But just as the women gathered from different backgrounds, so they assumed divergent agendas for the organization. Sarah Kimball's group had begun with the almost exclusive purpose of providing benevolent services; that purpose carried through the two years of the Society and became its most lasting characteristic. But a close reading of the minutes of the two years of the society reveals other purposes and achievements. To the stated objectives of "administering to [the] wants" of the poor, were added other responsibilities: "correcting the morals and strengthening the virtues of the female community" [*female* has been stricken out in the original]; the practice of admitting no woman to the society without a recommend as to her worthiness; the expounding of doctrine, which charter had been given Emma Smith in her Doctrine and Covenants revelation, and the exercise of the spiritual gifts. That so much of the impact of the society should be in areas other than temporal welfare suggests that, in the mind of Joseph Smith, at least, as perceived in his sermons, there was an agenda more essential than the care of the poor.

The timing of the organization of the Relief Society is significant to a partially understood purpose for which the society seems to have been intended.⁹ The day before the March 17 meeting, in the same room, Joseph

⁸Nauvoo Census, 1842, microfilm, Church Archives.

⁹William Lawrence Foster, "Between Two Worlds: The Origins of Shaker Celibacy, Oneida Community Complex Marriage, and Mormon Polygamy" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1976), pp. 224–28.

WOMEN AT THE RELIEF SOCIETY ORGANIZATION MEETING, MARCH 17, 1842					
		Neighbors of Sarah M. Kimball, likely to have attended the March 4 meeting	Neighbors to Joseph Smith, or known to be living or have lived in the Smith home	Wives or daughters of general officers of the church	Endowed before Joseph Smith's death Sealed during his lifetime to Joseph Smith
Emma Hale Smith		X	Wife of Joseph Smith	X	X
Sarah M. Cleveland	X				X
Phebe Ann Hawkes	X				
Elizabeth Jones	X				
Sophia Packard	X				
Philinda Myrick (Merrick)		X			
Martha Night		X	Wife of Bishop Vinson Knight, deceased 31 Jul 1842		X
Desdemona Fullmer		X			X
Leonora Taylor		X	Wife of John Taylor	X	
Bathsheba W. Smith		X	Wife of George A. Smith	X	
Phebe M. Wheeler		X			
Elvira A. Coles (Cowles)		X			X
Margaret A. Cook	X				
Athalia Robinson	tempor- arily	X	Daughter of Sidney Rigdon		
Sarah M. Kimball	X				approached but declined
Eliza R. Snow	X				X
Sophia Robinson					
Nancy Rigdon	tempor- arily	X	Daughter of Sidney Rigdon		approached but declined
Sophia Marks		X	Daughter of William Marks		
Elizabeth Ann Whitney		X	Wife of Newel K. Whitney	X	Sarah Ann

Smith had organized the Nauvoo lodge of the Masonic Order. Three weeks later he would induct a chosen group of his male associates into the Holy Order, the name by which the priesthood endowment was identified. In succeeding weeks the two rituals, Masonic and priesthood, would be conducted in the same room in which the Relief Society met, the Masonic orders in the evenings, the endowments in the afternoons. Considering the significance of women to the most important of those orders, the endowment, and reading carefully Joseph Smith's sermons to the women in the Relief Society, it becomes apparent he was preparing the women of the Church for that eventuality when they too would participate. That the Prophet anticipated that this "society of the virtuous and those who will walk circumspectly" remain small and "select" is revealed in his comments to the third meeting that they "were going too fast" — the original twenty members had already grown to eighty-eight.¹⁰ His agenda altered with the interest of so many women in joining, however, such that by April 28, when he preached his most powerful sermon, he was willing to agree that "if you do right, [there is] no danger of going too fast." Even so, at that meeting he required that the women whose worthiness had not been proved by the membership process be excused, that only those accepted as faithful hear his message. Priesthood, the spiritual gifts, keys of authority, and proper church organization being stayed "until the Temple is completed" were dealt with in his address. Its overtones of coming blessings for the women is underscored a month later when Bishop Newel K. Whitney, himself recently endowed, "rejoiced at the formation of the Society that we might improve upon our talents and to prepare for those blessings which God is soon to bestow upon us." That four of the women present at the first meeting were among those endowed during Joseph Smith's lifetime does not prove a hidden intent, but adds to other indications of a dual purpose in the organizing of the women in 1842.¹¹

Lists compiled by Dean Jessee and Jeffery Johnson have possibly some bearing on the list of women invited to the March 17 meeting. Closely connected to the endowment in the minds of Church leaders was the principle of celestial marriage, or, as then interpreted, plural marriage. Of the twenty women at the meeting, one was first wife to Joseph Smith, one gave him her daughter as a plural wife, two were offered the chance to become his wives but declined, and five more, thus invited, accepted. Most of these negotiations took place within weeks before or after the March 17 meeting. Besides those involved with Joseph Smith in plural marriage, three women of the group were married to other men who took plural wives.

The spiritual component of the Relief Society in Nauvoo is undeniable: after the April 14 meeting the Relief Society presidency administered to Sister Durfee for her health; during the next meeting, her witness to the healing was followed by manifestations of other spiritual gifts. Eliza R. Snow blessed Presendia Buel, prophesying over her; Abigail Leonard and others testified to the truth of the prophecies; Sarah Cleveland spoke in tongues, and Mrs. Sessions (presumably Patty Sessions) interpreted. At the next meeting, the word having

¹⁰Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, March 30, 1842, Church Archives.

¹¹Names courtesy Andrew Ehat.

gotten out of the women's exercise of the gifts, Joseph Smith, taking his text from 1 Corinthians 12 and 13, approved the limited use of the charismatic expressions. Thus were institutionalized the ritual observances which would mark the practice of Mormon women for the next half century, rituals fostered by and most characteristic of the "leading sisters."

The benevolent, "relief" aspect of the society was, however, the more pervasive, even in Nauvoo. During the second season of its existence (the society met only during the summer months, mainly because of the lack of space large enough to house the meetings, even after the body had divided itself by wards), all but two of the charter members faded from the records, and the activities of the second group of leaders were almost exclusively welfare oriented.

The third season began auspiciously in the spring of 1844 with Emma Smith again taking the lead. Knowing the limits of space, she conducted the same meeting four times, at ten o'clock and one o'clock on March 9 and 16. There she delivered a double-talk indictment of plural marriage, a coded, but unmistakable opposition to the practice which her husband was ever more widely promulgating. After those four sessions, as John Taylor later explained, "the meetings were discontinued," because "Emma Smith the Pres[ident] taught the sisters that the principle of plural marriage . . . was not of God."¹² Eliza R. Snow left the situation ambiguous by acknowledging to a Relief Society in 1868 that "Emma Smith . . . the Presidentess . . . gave it [Relief Society] up so as not to lead the society in Erro[r]."¹³

Out of the Nauvoo Relief Society, then, came women who would add to that beginning other shared experiences: temple endowments, sealings, participation in plural marriage, and the trials of continued loyalty and unflinching obedience to Church leaders. Of the charter members, four women would be counted among the female elite in Utah forty years later: Sarah M. Kimball, Elizabeth Ann Whitney, Eliza R. Snow, and Bathsheba W. Smith. Four others, Zina D. H. Jacobs [later Young], her sister Presendia L. Buel [later Kimball], Mary Isabella Horne, and Phoebe Woodruff, all joined the Nauvoo Relief Society within its first months, and though their association there was not demonstrably close, the shared knowledge gained there became a later binding force for them.

The practices and relationships begun at Nauvoo solidified in Winter Quarters, that shanty-town on the Missouri River where the first groups of Saints waited almost a year before finishing their trek from Illinois to the Great Basin. The significance of the events of that place that first winter have not been fully assessed, especially as far as women's affairs are concerned. It was there that the associations and ordinances of Nauvoo tightened into the bonds of families real and adopted, which, as Quinn demonstrated, formed a basis of selection into the leadership positions of the male hierarchy. Similarly, among the women bonds not only of kinship in the newly acknowledged plural

¹²John Taylor, as quoted in Harrisville Ward General Minutes, June 29, 1881, Church Archives. For an account of these events from the viewpoint of Emma Smith herself, see Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery's biography soon forthcoming from Doubleday.

¹³West Jordan Ward Relief Society Minutes, September 7, 1868, Church Archives.

families, but of sisterhood born of proximity and necessity were formed whose ties would continue, in many cases, into the next century.

Readers of Eliza R. Snow's Winter Quarters diary, and that of Patty Sessions, have noted the proliferation of "blessing meetings" which filled the afternoons and evenings from midwinter until the time of departure of the various companies. Kenneth Godfrey, in a description of Winter Quarters through the eyes, mainly, of Mary Haskins Parker Richards, observed that those meetings were restricted mainly to the ecclesiastical elite.¹⁴ If he is right, then the thesis is even more accurate than supposed: that in Winter Quarters the women who would lead out in women's affairs in Utah identified themselves, set their standards, re-established certain rituals, and thus cemented the ties which held their group.

A significant occasion took place at Christmas 1846, when a group of the women gathered for a visit. Eliza R. Snow wrote of the event in her diary:

This mor[n]ing take leave of the female family and visit sis. [Patty] Sessions with Loisa [Beaman] and Zina [D. H. Jacobs] very pleasantly. Last eve we had a very interesting time to close my five-day visit with the girls, for whom my love seem'd to increase with every day's acquaintance. To describe the scene alluded to would be beyond my pow'r. Suffice it to say, the spirit of the Lord was pour'd out and we receive'd a blessing thro' our beloved mother Chase and sis Clarissa by the gift of tongues.¹⁵

Two significant notes grow from this account: first that the women were perpetuating the spiritual activity which bound them together in commitment to the faith. Such meetings would escalate in Winter Quarters the following spring, continue as feasible across the Plains, carry on for the first few years in the Valley, and be relived in the initial settlement phases of colonies such as Cardston, Alberta, and Snowflake, Arizona. The emotional bonding of women under such circumstances has been described in Carroll Smith Rosenberg's 1975 study of "The Female World of Love and Ritual" as characteristic of the homo-social patterns of the nineteenth century.¹⁶ The ritual blessing each of the other could not but strengthen whatever individual friendships might be forming under the adverse and isolated conditions of the winter's camp.

The second significant note deals with the individual women named in that and adjacent entries. It is apparent that in Winter Quarters, for the first time above whispers, plural wives were identifying themselves to each other. In the case cited, Brigham Young was a husband to all but one of the "female family," Mother Chase, and she was mother of Clarissa Ross, Young's plural wife since 1844. Loisa Beaman and Zina Jacobs who accompany Eliza, and Eliza herself, were all Young's wives, and Patty Sessions, whom the three women afterward visit, had, as they, been a plural wife of Joseph Smith.

Among the participants in subsequent Winter Quarters blessing meetings were most of the wives of Brigham Young, and those of Heber C. Kimball,

¹⁴Kenneth W. Godfrey, "Winter Quarters: Glimmering Glimpses into Mormon Religion and Social Life," (Unpublished manuscript in the files of Leonard J. Arrington).

¹⁵Eliza R. Snow, Diary, 1846-1849, January 1, 1847, microfilm, Church Archives. The original diaries are in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, and are under preparation for publication by the present author.

¹⁶Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth Century America," *Signs* 1 (Autumn 1975):1-29.

Young's next in command. Eliza R. Snow, whose reputation in Nauvoo had been based mainly on her intellectual and poetic gifts, here emerges as spiritual leader, an honor she shares with Patty Sessions who plays a lieutenant's role to Eliza's general. Legitimized by her marriage since October 1844 to Brigham Young, Eliza could also speak of her earlier preference by Joseph Smith, a fact she continued to emphasize in later years.

Two sisters prominent in the Winter Quarters accounts are Zina Huntington Jacobs and Presendia Huntington Buel [or Buell], both of whom had chosen Joseph Smith over their living husbands, and since had been relocated, Zina in Brigham Young's family, and Presendia in Heber Kimball's. Winter Quarters brought them together as the wives of the two leading elders merged in the social interaction of the camp. Bolstered by each other, and by their friendship with Eliza Snow and Patty Sessions, they rose to some heights in the blessing meetings, as indicated by the frequency with which the diaries mention their names. Vilate Kimball and Mary Ann Young, first surviving wives of their husbands, figured in the meetings, but as attenders more than as active participants. Not herself of the Young-Kimball group, but certainly linked by affection, and by the marriages of her son and daughter to Kimballs, was Elizabeth Ann Whitney, who had taken such an active role in the Nauvoo Relief Society. In Winter Quarters her gifts of tongues and prophecy gained her the respect of her sisters, and her title of "Mother Whitney" became even more widespread.

That the women varied widely in age seemed no deterrent to their mutual affection and concern. The test of faith which plural marriage was becoming had cut across age barriers, as women in their late forties found themselves sister wives to women half their ages. The meetings in Winter Quarters bound, more than divided, the women in their common cause: older wives mentored younger ones, delivered their babies, coached them in their exercise of "the gifts," while younger ones performed tasks for their older sister wives, visited with them, honored them with the title "Mother." The accounts of the meetings show a second echelon of younger women learning their roles: such names as Helen Mar Kimball, Mary Isabella Horne, and Emmeline Harris Whitney [later Wells], occasionally mentioned in Winter Quarters, would appear increasingly in the next thirty years after arrival in Utah.

For the first few years in Great Salt Lake City, the informal meetings continued as they had in Winter Quarters, as Richard Jensen has noted.¹⁷ The blessing meetings were succeeded by a rash of various associations for very disparate purposes, none of which seem to have brought together the same groups of women. In 1854 the Polysophical Society, in Apostle Lorenzo Snow's hall, collected an intellectual elite of both sexes, Lorenzo's sister, Eliza, being central to the enterprise. The Council of Health, and its female counterpart, interested the more practical Patty Sessions and other midwives and lay practitioners. Elocution societies, the Universal Scientific Society, the Horticultural Society, the Deseret Philharmonic Society, and the Deseret Agricultural and

¹⁷Richard L. Jensen, "Clothing the Indians and Strengthening the Saints: Organized Activity of Mormon Women During the 'Lapse' of the Relief Society, 1844-1867," *Task Papers in LDS History*, No. 27 (Salt Lake City: Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979), p. 2. A version of this paper will soon be published in *Dialogue*.

Manufacturing Society attracted their separate followings. One such thrust was especially significant: with the blessings of Brigham Young, Relief Societies sprang up in at least twenty-two wards, this time with the express purpose of providing clothing for Indian women and children. But there was no central organization, and though some of the women who composed the ecclesiastical and social elite of the community were involved, they were not together in one group. Only in their individual callings as workers in the Endowment House might the leading women have served together.

The 1850s Relief Societies, disrupted in most wards by the Utah War, continued in others almost exclusively as a welfare service, looking to the needs of the poor of the ward. The winter of 1866-67, however, brought some innovations which suggest a widening official view of women and their roles. Brigham Young reestablished the School of the Prophets among the men of the Church, and announced on at least one occasion his intention to so organize the women. The cooperative movement, with its drive to monopolize purchasing to local outlets drew attention to the need to persuade women to its principles, both as consumers and as workers in the operation. The General Sunday School Union called attention to the rearing of children, considered women's work. And above all, on the highest spiritual plane, Brigham Young, as holder of the keys, began administering the sacred second anointing, an ordinance which men cannot receive without their wives also being anointed with them.¹⁸

That the Relief Society should experience its third birth at that time seems consistent, and that it should have a spiritual focus, inevitable. Eliza R. Snow, who had been officiating as matron in the Endowment House, and whose reputation as prophetess and priestess had spread far, was called to head up the women's work. She had been secretary in the Nauvoo society, and promulgated the example of that organization by carrying with her its minutes, reading from Joseph Smith's sermons as she instructed local leaders. Although her 1867 call to organize the Relief Society carried no official title, she made of it the supreme office among Mormon women: "Presidentess of the female portion of the human race," was the honor accorded her by one over-eager ward secretary as she traveled about organizing local units.

But in her calling she served alone at first. Not until 1869 did she have a coterie of aides to assist in the work. It was in the organization of the Retrenchment Association that the "leading sisters" came together and became the force behind the local Relief Societies.

The Senior and Junior Cooperative Retrenchment Association began when Mary Isabella Horne, one of the younger stalwarts from Nauvoo and Winter Quarters days, was visiting her son, bishop in the central Utah community of Gunnison, when Brigham Young and his entourage arrived en route to the Dixie colonies. Young was disturbed that the women in the various towns were being such Marthas about the fine meals they prepared that they were losing the Mary-like values of his visits. He assigned to Mary Isabella the task of teaching her sisters a simpler way, encouraging them to "retrench" from their

¹⁸Wilford Woodruff Diary, December 31, 1866; also year end summary for 1867, 1868, Church Archives.

elaborate preparations. Arriving back in Salt Lake City, Sister Horne called on Sister Eliza Snow and Sister Margaret Smoot, and the three approached President Young for clarification.¹⁹ That one meeting seems to have been his total official involvement in the setting up of a group which would meet thereafter for at least two decades with agendas expanded far beyond the initial goals of the retrenchment movement. The women elected their own president, Sister Horne, and six counselors and established a pattern of meeting on alternate Thursdays. Called finally the "ladies semi-monthly meeting," it was the only continuous gathering of women which crossed ward and stake lines, was not accountable to local authority, and brought together the "leading sisters" in a network which was capable of unhindered activity.

A reading of the three years of minutes of that group available in manuscript form, and of the summaries which later appeared periodically in the *Woman's Exponent*, reveals the working of the network.²⁰ It was there that the women not only shared personal witness and affirmed sisterhood, but learned of activities they would later more formally support: the retrenchment itself, of course; various Relief Society programs; cooperatives; home manufacture; civic duties; the MIA for young men, (which would grow out of their young women's example); Primary Associations; and the United Order. In each case, the group assembled in the Fourteenth Ward rooms felt it entirely appropriate to take unilateral action towards the goals it espoused, often with no more suggestion, as the Derr paper notes, than a casual comment of Brigham Young to one of the women in the group. After he had spoken to Emmeline B. Wells about the necessity for storing grain, for example, she stewed for a while, wrote an editorial for the *Exponent*, and then the women in their regular meeting, directed by Eliza Snow, elected a Central Board to oversee the project. What began as an assignment to Wells became the responsibility of the whole group.²¹ Following similar steps, the women of the semi-monthly meeting, especially those who traveled as companions to Eliza Snow on her frequent tours to the various settlements, directed affairs of their sisters throughout Mormondom, independent of hierarchical authority chains.

A group as powerful as this, it can safely be assumed, would of necessity have as its core those women who individually held the reins of leadership among their sisters — an elite, not only ecclesiastically, but socially and politically. A tally of the women named in the minutes, noting the frequency with which they are mentioned, confirmed the thesis with which this paper began: (1) there was an elite among the Mormon women in Utah, (2) that elite had power in its sphere, (3) the women who made up the power base were those who had come earliest into the Valley, having undergone the early formative experiences in Nauvoo and Winter Quarters. The names which recur most frequently in the minutes are familiar: Eliza R. Snow, Zina D. H. Young, Presendia L. Kimball, Elizabeth Ann Whitney, Sarah M. Kimball, Bathsheba W. Smith, Mary Isabella

¹⁹Susa Young Gates, *History of the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association* . . . (Salt Lake City: General Board of the YLMIA, 1911), p. 31.

²⁰Minutes of the Senior and Junior Cooperative Retrenchment Association, 1870–73, Church Archives.

²¹*Woman's Exponent* 5 (December 1, 1876): 98.

Horne, Phoebe Woodruff. These are the leaders. They have in common more than just those characteristics of primacy and longevity. They live in the central wards of Salt Lake City. (Margaret Smoot, who often travelled with Eliza Snow, pled distance as excusing her from the meetings: she lived in the 20th Ward, six blocks from downtown!) Six of the eight here named are married to general authorities of the church. All are plural wives; all had belonged to the Nauvoo Relief Society and all but one had participated in the Winter Quarters experience.

Next to this inner elite is a second echelon of "leading sisters," identified, in most cases, by their association with the inner core. These women, such as Emmeline Wells, Hannah T. King, Willmirth East, Elizabeth Howard, Zina Y. Williams, and Helen Mar Whitney, shared some, but not all, the characteristics of the leading group. Emmeline Wells had been at Winter Quarters, but had not participated then, or in the early years in Salt Lake City, in the blessing meetings; Hannah King was married to a non-Mormon, (though she was later sealed to Brigham Young), and Elizabeth Howard had not entered into polygamy; Willmirth East moved to Arizona; Zina Young Williams, who later moved to Canada, was a daughter and Helen Mar Kimball Whitney a daughter-in-law of the older leading sisters.

These and other second echelon women, well schooled in the advantages of a united corps of strong women, carried on much the same pattern of unhindered leadership in women's projects as they functioned remote from the central group. Jane S. Richards, living in Ogden, too far for intimate involvement with the inner group, nevertheless kept in close touch with them by mail and visits each way. Willmirth East, writing from Arizona, acknowledged the primacy of Eliza Snow's advice over that of her local priesthood authority in the affairs of the women. And Zina Young Williams, emigrating to southern Alberta in 1887 with her new husband Charles Ora Card, maintained strong ties with her mother's inner circle in Salt Lake City, thus reinforcing the position of leadership which she held by virtue of her role as wife of the president of the colony, though not, as one might expect, as Relief Society president. In these, as in other colonies, the women continued those rituals which bound them together in their female groups — the blessing meetings, the washing and anointings, the administrations, as well as the institutionalized Relief Society — in much the same patterns as had been established in the original settlement of Salt Lake City a generation earlier.

Meanwhile, after 1877, when stake organizations regionalized some of the responsibility and created a new level of administration, and 1880, when the women's organizations, Relief Society, MIA, and Primary, were given each its own head, the power of the Salt Lake City central group gradually diminished. The "old girls" died, albeit slowly — Bathsheba Smith remained president of the Relief Society until 1910 — and the younger women had less in common. But for that half century there was a powerful elite running as an effective undercurrent in the tides of Mormonism. Rulers in women's sphere, "free to create their own forms of personal, social and political relationships,"²² they

²²Estelle Freedman, "Separatism as Strategy: Female Institution Building and American Feminism, 1870–1930," *Feminist Studies* 5 (Fall 1979): 514.

participated parallel to their brothers in what they considered to be the building of God's kingdom. Brigham Young knew the power of the women. He said,

I may preach to the female portion of this community until I am as old as Methusaleh; but when they, the sisters, themselves, take hold to reform they will wield an influence that will be successful, and will save many thousands of dollars yearly to the community. It is utterly vain for me to try to exert such an influence.²³

The statement, flippant though it sounds, reflects an organizational reality. Women were their own acknowledged and unquestioned leaders. With operational power thus vested in a cohesive group of faithful, conscientious women, it is not surprising that they and their sisters contributed so remarkably to the political, educational, economic, and social well-being of the Mormon community of the Intermountain West. As Leonard Arrington concluded, with atypical restraint, their "contributions to Mormon economic and territorial growth have not been negligible."²⁴

²³*Deseret News Weekly*, August 11, 1869.

²⁴Leonard J. Arrington, "The Economic Role of Pioneer Mormon Women," *Western Humanities Review* 9 (Spring 1955): 164.

THE GRACE ARRINGTON AWARD FOR HISTORICAL EXCELLENCE

The husband and children of Grace Fort Arrington, a member of the Mormon History Association who died in March, 1982 have established the "Grace Arrington Award for Historical Excellence." A prize of \$500 will be awarded annually in honor of Grace "to that person who during the previous calendar year published a book or article of distinction or performed other service which in the opinion of the judges represents a signal contribution to understanding the Mormon past." Judges are Leonard Arrington, Davis Bitton, and James B. Allen.

The first recipient of the award is Dean C. Jessee, senior research historian with the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute of Church History and associate professor of history and church history at Brigham Young University. Dean Jessee is editor of the volume *Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons*, published by Deseret Book Company in 1974, and author of articles of distinction that have appeared in *Journal of Mormon History*, *Western Historical Quarterly*, *Brigham Young University Studies*, *Dialogue*, *The Ensign*, and other church and professional magazines and journals. Dean is a past president of the Mormon History Association.

The judges, members of the Arrington family, and that year's winner of the Mormon History Association Award will normally not be eligible for the award, which will usually be announced in early summer of each year.

Millenarianism and the Early Mormon Mind

By Grant Underwood

A half a century ago, Herbert Butterfield composed a classic essay entitled, "The Whig Interpretation of History." Therein, he described the distortions that occur when historians impose a rigid point of view on their study of the past. Such an approach, he warned, constrains the historian to be "vigilant for likenesses between past and present, instead of being vigilant for unlikenesses."¹ And it is the elucidation of *unlikenesses* that Butterfield felt was the chief aim of the historian. Given the nature of Mormon theological claims, it is understandable why many doctrinal dissertations tend to be "vigilant for likenesses." Yet, as Butterfield has pointed out, this is not good history, nor is it good theology. If one believes that revelation and understanding come "line-upon-line," he must realize the unlikelihood of intersecting church history at any two points in time and finding a particular doctrine being taught in precisely the same way. Beginning, then, with the assumption that the early Mormon mind was in some degree unlike our own, this article explores various aspects of Latter-day Saint millenarianism as an aid to identifying and understanding some of the unique features of their thought world.

Before proceeding, it is necessary briefly to discuss millenarianism itself. Far more than a set of beliefs about the chronology of future events, millenarianism is a comprehensive way of looking at human history, a particular kind of salvationism, a "cosmology of eschatology." In general, a religious movement is said to be millenarian when it views salvation as a) *collective*, to be enjoyed by the faithful as a group; b) *terrestrial*, to be realized here on earth; c) *total*, to completely transform earth life; d) *imminent*, to come soon and swiftly rather

Grant Underwood is Director of the LDS Institute of Religion adjacent to California State University at Los Angeles. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Mormon History Association in Rexburg, Idaho.

¹Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (1931; reprint ed., New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1965), pp. 11–12.

than gradually; and e) *miraculous*, to be accomplished by, or with the help of, supernatural agencies.²

But what of the Mormons? In the formative years, before the vision of the three degrees of glory had significantly influenced their thinking, the Saints expected to realize their salvation as a collective group. They did not then emphasize that the infinite variations in individual righteousness would result in a correspondingly varied placement in a multi-leveled heaven. Whereas modern Mormons talk of "making it" to the celestial kingdom as the reward for faithfulness, their predecessors pointed to the millennium where they would reign on earth with Christ a thousand years. In either case, the site is *terra firma*, since spatially the celestial kingdom is a terrestrial kingdom after all. Regarding the totality of the future transformation of life on earth, Mormon literature retains to this day a literal interpretation of prophetic allusions to the millennial unification of continental landmasses, the herbivorization of carnivores, and the co-mingling of mortals and immortals. A feeling of imminence seems to have been pervasive in the early years and was boldly advanced by leading brethren. Today, as then, the Church refrains from official prediction, but as millennial themes are now developed less frequently by the General Authorities and as lay interpretations vary, it is more difficult to generalize about current conceptions of imminence. Finally, because early Mormon rhetoric was more apocalyptic than it is today, great emphasis was placed upon the role of supernatural intervention. The rigors of building the Great Basin kingdom did much to mitigate any potential notions of a "waiting remnant." As will be recognized, therefore, early Mormon beliefs correspond to each category in the millenarian model, thus admitting application of insights from relevant millennial studies.³

An incident from the life of Joseph Smith serves as a point of departure. One morning, in December 1835, the Prophet and his family set out for Painesville, a town not far from where they were living in Kirtland, Ohio. While passing through Mentor Street, they overtook a team with two men in a sleigh. Joseph politely asked permission to pass and it was granted. While moving around them, however, he recorded that "they bawled out, 'do you get any revelations lately?' with an addition of blackguard language that I did not understand." The Prophet said nothing at the time, but later journalized:

I was led to marvel at the longsuffering and condescension of our heavenly father in permitting these ungodly wretches to possess this goodly land. . . . And we rejoice that the time is at hand, when the wicked who will not repent will be swept from the earth as

²The multitude of recent millennial studies is sifted and weighed in Leonard I. Sweet, "Millennialism in America: Recent Studies," *Theological Studies* 40 (September 1979): 510–31; and Hillel Schwartz, "The End of the Beginning: Millenarian Studies, 1969–1975," *Religious Studies Review* 2 (July 1976): 1–15. The millenarian model is from Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, rev. ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 15.

³I have explored the ideas summarized in this paragraph at greater length in two articles: "'Saved or Damned': Tracing a Persistent Protestantism in Early Mormon Thought," delivered at the 1982 Annual Meeting of the Mormon History Association; and, "Seminal versus Sesquicentennial Saints: A Look at Mormon Millennialism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 14 (Spring 1981): 32–44.

with a besom of destruction, and the earth become an inheritance of the poor and the meek.⁴

Few Mormons today would expect such a journal entry from Spencer W. Kimball. Its judgmental and vindictive tone hardly fits the popular perception of a benign prophet. Does this mean that Joseph was less tolerant, less emotionally mature than later Church leaders? Was he flawed with a flaring temper like Paul who, when smitten by the high priest, retorted, "God shall smite thee thou whited wall?"⁵ Or, did he simply have a bad day? While all are possibilities, a more satisfactory answer explores the ways in which millenarianism informed his response.

To begin with, the use of the word "wicked" is significant. While it has always defined the morally degenerate, it was frequently used by Mormons in the early years as a convenient label for all who did not accept the restored gospel. Believers were lumped together as Saints, Israel, or the elect; while unbelievers were variously labeled sinners, Gentiles, or the wicked.⁶ Such social reductionism may seem strange to modern Mormons, but it is quite typical of certain small groups with clearly marked membership, especially millenarian movements. In her book, *Natural Symbols*, Mary Douglas points out that the ideas of "inside and outside, purity within, corruption without" are "common to small bounded communities" and can be described as "a form of metaphysical dualism." The doctrine of "two kinds of humanity, one good, the other bad, and the association of the badness of some humans with cosmic powers of evil," she writes, "is basically similar to some of the so-called dualist religions."⁷ Not only did Zoroastrianism divide the universe between two warring deities in its search for a satisfying theodicy, but such apocalyptic writings as Daniel and Revelation, which constitute the mainstay of Christian millenarianism, also dualistically depict history as the ongoing battle between the Lord and Lucifer. Therein, the lines between good and evil, between saintly and satanic are clearly drawn. All of which has important consequences for how millenarians picture the world around them. In looking at early Christianity as a millenarian movement, John Gager found that the otherwise complicated moral judgments required in complex society were "resolved into a series of binary oppositions: poor-rich, good-evil, pious-hypocrite, elect-damned. And a final reckoning was proclaimed for the near future." Similarly Kenelm Burridge's studies led him to conclude that millenarian movements take the disquieting and "unmanageable manyness" of life and re-order it into "sharply contrasted contraries."⁸

⁴Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1964), 2:323–24. Hereafter cited as *HC*.

⁵Acts 23:2–3.

⁶See note #3.

⁷Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (London: Cresset Press, 1970), pp. 118–19. I am grateful to John F. Wilson for bringing this to my attention.

⁸John G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), p. 25; Kenelm Burridge, *New Heaven, New Earth: A Study of Millenarian Activities* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 147.

Evidence of such cosmic dualism abounds in early Mormon thought. In the Book of Mormon, for example, one finds this classification of known religions:

And he said unto me: Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth.⁹

The same absence of gray is apparent later in the book when Mormon counsels believers on how to discern the ultimate source of all things. That which "inviteth and enticeth" to sin and evil is from the devil, while that which "inviteth and enticeth" to do good is "inspired of God." Thus, he concludes the way to judge is as plain "as the daylight is from the dark night."¹⁰ The emphasis on the simplicity of moral judgment is striking. An 1832 revelation dichotomized humanity in this fashion: "whoso cometh not unto me is under the bondage of sin . . . and by this you may know the righteous from the wicked."¹¹ Again, the sharp contrast between the righteous and the wicked based solely upon their response to the message of the Restoration is apparent.

Given such a polarized cosmology, Joseph Smith's reaction to the world around him seems more understandable. In his recent book, *The Logic of Millennial Thought*, James W. Davidson demonstrates at length how what he calls the "rhetoric of polarization" inheres in all millenarian movements.¹² If understandable and inherent, though, it could also be problematic. Such an outlook expects opposition, assumes animosities, and in so doing creates a sort of siege mentality. If history is seen as one continual struggle of the forces of God against Satan, "it is natural," explains religious historian James Moorhead, "for the adherents of the Kingdom to perceive a coherent, sinister intelligence animating the various problems they encounter."¹³

To early Mormons, the identity of "the Mother of Harlots" mentioned in John's Apocalypse was no mystery at all. "It needs no prophetic vision to unravel," wrote the editor of the *Times and Seasons*. "The old church is the mother and the protestants are the lewd daughters."¹⁴ Such sweeping categorizations followed naturally from a dualistic cosmology rooted in apocalyptic assumptions and permeated the rank and file membership of the Church. One has only to peruse the numerous letters of both missionaries and members that

⁹1 Nephi 14:10.

¹⁰Moroni 7:12-19.

¹¹Doctrine and Covenants 84:51-53. Hereafter cited as *D&C*.

¹²James West Davidson, *The Logic of Millennial Thought: Eighteenth-Century New England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 163-75, 281-97. Polarized perceptions of society, however, are not restricted to millenarian or even religious groups. As George F. Kennan wrote in "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25 (July 1947): 59, referring to Soviet attitudes towards the outside world, "It is the undeniable privilege of every man to prove himself right in the thesis that the world is his enemy; for if he reiterates it frequently enough and makes it the background of his conduct he is bound eventually to be right." My thanks to Dean L. May for pointing this out.

¹³James H. Moorhead, *American Apocalypse: Yankee Protestants and the Civil War, 1860-1869* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 7.

¹⁴*Times and Seasons* 6 (February 1845): 811. Hereafter cited as *TS*.

appear in nearly every issue of the early Church periodicals in order to notice this.¹⁵

Then, too, there were explicitly apocalyptic passages in LDS scripture. When interpreted in the setting of antebellum America, they did not augur well for non-Mormon neighbors who rejected the Saints' message. Parley P. Pratt, for instance, pointed out that the Book of Mormon itself prophesied that all who would not hearken to it "shall be cut off from among the people. . . . This destruction," he continued, "includes an utter overthrow, and desolation of all our Cities, Forts, and Strong Holds — an entire annihilation of our race, except such as embrace the Covenant, and are numbered with Israel."¹⁶

When Gentile neighbors learned that the Saints had fitted them into a larger-than-life battle either as emissaries of Satan or, at least, as the unwitting dupes he manipulated to block the progress of the Kingdom, it is little wonder their dander was raised. Years ago, David B. Davis documented the fear of conspiracy characteristic of antebellum America which manifested itself, in part, as a paranoia that Mormonism was un-American. What now seems apparent is that Mormon millenarianism disposed the Saints to a similar conspiratorial view which, clothed in scriptural imagery, leagued the whole sectarian world with Lucifer.¹⁷

If their millenarianism promoted social stereotyping, their experience in life seemed to validate it. During much of the first sixteen years of Mormon history, the saints experienced severe persecution and crisis conditions. While their millenarianism might have been partially responsible for provoking persecution, it is even more clear, as will be seen, that persecution intensified their millenarianism. Persecution served to concretize and localize the apocalyptic scenario encountered in the scriptures. The Saints knew that as time spiraled to its climax at the Second Coming, Satan would be waging a war of ever increasing intensity against them, and therefore, persecution became an assurance, albeit a painful one, that all was proceeding on prophetic schedule. As Moorhead explains, "opposition could in turn become evidence to the believer that the millennium was indeed approaching and that his zeal should be redoubled."¹⁸

Though physically destructive, such opposition, precisely because it fit into an eschatological drama with a pre-determined victory for the Saints, was less successful in daunting them. Their apocalyptic ideals provided strength in a

¹⁵See, for example, *TS, Messenger and Advocate, Elders' Journal*.

¹⁶Parley P. Pratt, *Mormonism Unveiled: Zion's Watchman Unmasked, and its Editor, Mr. L. R. Sunderland, Exposed: Truth Vindicated: The Devil Mad and Priestcraft in Danger!* (New York: O. Pratt & E. Fordham, 1838), p. 15.

¹⁷The fear of conspiracy in America is ably analyzed by David B. Davis in "Some Themes of Countersubversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47 (September 1960): 205–25.

It would seem that this disposition to a conspiratorial view of events persists among some modern Mormons who have no qualms about accepting a supposed international banking conspiracy as the real ruling power in the world. The idea is presented in Gary Allen and Larry Abraham, *None Dare Call It Conspiracy* (Seal Beach, California: Concord Press, 1972) and is stock-in-trade of ultraconservative groups.

¹⁸James H. Moorhead, "Social Reform and the Divided Conscience of Antebellum Protestantism," *Church History* 48 (December 1979): 421.

world turned upside down, and allowed them to rationalize otherwise irrational behavior. "Men cleave to hopes of imminent worldly salvation," notes Michael Barkun, "when the hammerblows of disaster destroy the world they have known."¹⁹ It was this hope that sustained exiled Jews in Babylon and embattled Christians in Rome and is the matrix from which apocalyptic writings emerge. Many scholars have concurred that millenarian movements are frequently hatched in the incubator of deprivation, distress, or disorientation.²⁰ While this does not account for the origin of Mormon millenarianism, which seems to result more from the literal hermeneutics with which the Saints approached Biblical prophecy, such conditions certainly nurtured preexisting tendencies. Furthermore, they help account for oscillations in millenarian intensity. As persecution increased, there was a corresponding increase in millenarian rhetoric.

This is clearly seen in the expulsion from Missouri. The besieged Saints were confronted forcibly with the stark inadequacy of their efforts to thwart the onslaughts of the Gentile enemy. As a result, they felt and expressed a heightened dependence upon God, realizing that nothing short of his supernatural intervention could defeat Satan's minions and usher in the long desired millennial day of rest. In a hymn composed shortly after the Saints' world had been shattered in Far West, Parley P. Pratt shifted from his previously pastoral treatment of eschatological themes to an apocalyptic one:

How long, O Lord, wilt thou forsake
The saints who tremble at Thy word?
Awake, O Arm, O God awake
And teach the nations Thou art God.

Descend with all thy holy Throng,
The year of thy redeemed bring near,
Haste, haste the day of vengeance on,
Bid Zion's children dry their tear.²¹

From Liberty Jail, Joseph Smith himself pled that the Lord would avenge them of their wrongs, expressing, at the same time, intense faith that "the time

¹⁹Michael Barkun, *Disaster and the Millennium* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 1.

²⁰The first to popularize the deprivation theory was Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," *American Anthropologist* 58 (1956): 264–81. Later discussants include Peter Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1957); Vittorio Lanternari, *The Religions of the Oppressed* (New York: Knopf, 1963); Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels* (1959; reprint ed., New York: W. W. Norton, 1965); Sylvia Thrupp, ed., *Millennial Dreams in Action: Essays in Comparative History* (1962; reprint ed., New York: Schocken Books, 1970); Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, rev. ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); and Guenter Lewy, *Religion and Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972). Briefer, but also insightful is Charles Y. Glock, "The Role of Deprivation in the Origin and Evolution of Religious Groups," in Robert Lee and Martin E. Marty, eds., *Religion and Social Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 24–36.

²¹Samuel Russell, ed. and comp., *The Millennial Hymns of Parley Parker Pratt* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1913) p. 19. A similar sample of apocalyptic hymnwriting from the rank and file is this piece from young Joel H. Johnson:

How long O Lord shall men prevail,
To kill and drive thy saints?
Let not, O God, thy promise fail,
But hear thou their complaints!

soon shall come when the Son of Man shall descend in the clouds of heaven" and shall "have our oppressors in derision" and "will laugh at their calamity, and mock them when their fear cometh."²²

Similar sentiments were expressed after the martyrdom and on the eve of the exodus west. John Taylor spoke for many when he declared:

We owe the United States nothing. We go out by force, as exiles from freedom. The government and people owe us millions for the destruction of life and property in Missouri and in Illinois. The blood of our best men stains the land, and the ashes of our property will preserve it till God comes out of his hiding place, and gives this nation a hotter place than he did Sodom and Gomorrah. "When they cease to spoil, they shall be spoiled," for the Lord hath spoken it.²³

The connection between injustices suffered and apocalyptic yearnings is pointed. Earlier a *Times and Seasons* editorial had endeavored to comfort the saints with this thought: "He that said to the flood 'come' and make an end of wickedness, will say also 'go' to the elements, and sweep the earth with the besom of destruction till it is fit for Paradise again, and then my people shall inherit the kingdom."²⁴

Such rhetoric is typical of embattled millenarians. When a people feel the weight of the oppressor's heel, it is natural that of all the facets of the eschatological drama, the one they focus on the most is the destruction of the wicked. As Davidson explains, the judgments to be poured out "were part of an immutable guarantee that no matter how much the wicked seemed to triumph in the present age, God would supernaturally set the scales of Justice aright at the Day of Judgment."²⁵ Such was the simple yet profound hope of a great many early Mormons. In his study of millenarian movements Hillel Schwartz calls it the "ethos of judgment."²⁶ Since in the rhetoric of polarization the term "wicked" included all opposers, scriptural promises of their ultimate destruction at Christ's coming provided a satisfying conclusion to history in the Saints' eyes. One early member wrote to a kinsman in the East, recounting the hardships and deprivations endured in the last days of Nauvoo. His one hope, though, was that the Saints would "have a name and a being on the earth when our enemies are extinct or else the word of the Lord fails" and "we will some day become the head and not the tail."²⁷

In important ways such sentiments found their best contemporary ana-

And let thy judgements be made known,
Until oppression cease,
And wickedness shall all be gone,
The earth be filled with peace.

TS 2 (April 1841): 373–74.

²²HC 3:291–92.

²³TS 6 (December 1845): 1052.

²⁴TS 6 (July 1845): 952.

²⁵Davidson, *The Logic of Millennial Thought*, p. 83.

²⁶Hillel Schwartz, *The French Prophets: The History of a Millenarian Group in Eighteenth Century England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 3–4.

²⁷Solon Foster to Luther Foster, Foster Family Correspondence, 28 December 1848, Library-Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. Hereafter, Church Archives.

logue in the millenarianism of antebellum blacks. For them, as well as for the Mormons, the coming of Christ was a Day of Deliverance at once liberating and vindicating. Yet, the extent of this emphasis has been overlooked. Donald Matthews claims that "it is the Apocalypse which is missing from most evaluations of black Christianity."²⁸ Perhaps students of Mormonism have also failed to stress the importance to early Mormon theology of a day of judgment as part of the millennial drama.

The apocalyptic hope, however, is not restricted to those outwardly threatened. According to Davidson, whenever the elements of polarization *and* imminence combine in a millennial logic, "the temptation [grows] to bring down judgment future and apply it to the present."²⁹ Both early Mormon experience and ideology demonstrate that a definite "them — us" dichotomy prevailed. Furthermore, the feeling prevailed that the Lord's coming was nigh. According to the Davidson model, this should have led to a desire for prophecy to promptly take its rightful toll, regardless of external animosities. William Smith's remarks illustrate the point:

When I consider the condition of mankind, even, what are termed enlightened nations, and through the glass of scriptures see manifest all their blindness, depravity, and hypocrisy, my heart sickens at the sight and I turn away from the contemplation and I am ready to exclaim, O Lord!

How long shall such wickedness,
Be suffered in the land?
How long before thou make bare
Thy own Almighty hand?³⁰

Millenarianism also significantly shaped the saints' philosophy of missions. By applying what has already been learned of their millennial logic, important nuances of the early Mormon mind can be discerned. At the outset, it must be recognized that the very conception of their mission was polarized. For example, when Hazen Aldrich was set apart as one of the first Seventy, he was instructed that his twofold mission was to warn the wicked and gather the elect.³¹ Both facets need further consideration.

If raising "the warning voice" has come simply to be synonymous with sharing the gospel, such was not always the case.³² In Joseph's day, it had definite apocalyptic overtones. An early revelation commanded that every man should "lift a warning voice unto the inhabitants of the earth, and declare . . . that destruction shall come upon the wicked."³³ This the elders took literally. As one individual expressed it, "this is not the time to sing lullabies to a

²⁸Donald G. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 231.

²⁹Davidson, *The Logic of Millennial Thought*, p. 294.

³⁰TS 2 (June 1841): 445.

³¹Kirtland Council Minute Book, p. 174, Church Archives.

³²Bruce R. McConkie was quoted in a recent Melchizedek Priesthood Personal Study Guide that "when the missionaries or other members of the Church offer the gospel to the people of the world, they thereby raise the warning voice. *Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978), p. 3.

³³D&C 63:37

slumbering world.”³⁴ Thus, when Freeman Nickerson arrived in Boston, he announced in all earnestness:

I request the citizens and authorities of the city of Boston to open a house for the servant of the people, that the Lord hath sent to this city to warn the people of the destruction which will take place in this generation, that is now on the earth, and teach them how they may escape, and come through and abide the day of the second coming of Christ, to reign on the earth a thousand years.³⁵

In 1837, Parley Pratt was in New York City, where he published his first edition of *A Voice of Warning*. In a chapter not since included, he similarly declared:

Wo, wo, wo unto the inhabitants of this city; and again wo, wo, wo unto the inhabitants in all this land; for your sins have reached unto Heaven, and God has remembered your iniquities; and only this once will he call upon you to repent. . . . Behold the sword of vengeance hangs over you and except you repent, the Lord will cause that it shall soon overtake you.³⁶

It is evident in the early proclamations that the promised judgments are assumed to be imminent, physical, and this-worldly. Modern Mormons simply do not speak to their associates in such apocalyptic terms. Today, such “if-you-don’t-repent-you’ll-be destroyed” talk more accurately characterizes the proselyting of the Jehovah’s Witnesses than it does the Latter-day Saints. Or who would expect a modern Mormon to address his friends as did Edward Partridge on one occasion, and pointedly tell them that if they did not soon accept the gospel they would be swept off the face of the earth?³⁷ Latter-day Saint missionaries of today are influenced by a different psychology of motivation. To talk of impending destruction or imminent punishments is perceived as needless negativism. They have learned that it is usually more productive to tell a person what he will miss out on rather than how he will be punished for not joining the Church. The current feeling seems to be that the numerous commands to warn of impending judgments are better complied with if approached less explicitly, discretion being more important than description.

In any case, the early Saints did not have the benefit of modern psychology to make their message less abrasive. Rather, they had a whole Bible full of doomsaying holy men after whom to pattern their ministries. Then, too, instead of being entirely negative, it must be remembered that the early sword was indeed two-edged. For those inclined to accept the message of the Restoration, the opportunities were described in glowing terms. The long lost gifts of the Spirit had been returned by a gracious God for the edification of his saints. The apostolic authority and powers were once again upon the earth. And, of course, the latter day glory of Israel was described in delicious detail. Whether blessing or punishment, though, it was couched in imminent terms, and immediate results were expected. The immediate reward was the millennium, to reign with Christ. The immediate punishment was destruction, to be consumed at his coming. There was no need to talk of the distant eternities, or to elaborate

³⁴TS 2 (July 1841): 461

³⁵Reported in TS 3 (May 1842): 798.

³⁶Parley P. Pratt, *A Voice of Warning* (New York: W. Sandford, 1837), pp. 141–42.

³⁷*Latter Day Saints Messenger and Advocate* 1 (Jan 1835): 61. Hereafter cited as MA.

on how the gospel would enrich what little of their lives was left anyway. It was "a day of warning, and not a day of many words."³⁸

If the missionaries of the 1830s were both more explicit and more insistent in their warning of an imminent destruction of unbelievers, what effect did this have on why people joined the church? Did fear play a role? Does it affect a listener differently if the consequences of non-acceptance are tangibly portrayed as both physical and imminent instead of being described in abstract spiritual terms and relegated to the afterlife? Though the investigation of such questions lies beyond the scope of this study, the recent efforts of Joseph F. Zygmunt in analyzing the psychology of motivation within social movements and of sociologist James A. Beckford in analyzing why people join the Jehovah's Witnesses are suggestive of approaches that might profitably be applied to early Mormonism.³⁹

Beyond being a command, literal warnings of doom had a clearly worked out theological rationale in the early years. In his influential *Government of God*, John Taylor argued that such declarations were the particular province of the latter day dispensation. Had not a modern revelation specifically commanded the elders to set forth "clearly and understandingly the desolation of abomination in the last days?"⁴⁰ "If the Gospel formerly was to be proclaimed to all nations, so it is now, with this difference associated with it, there is to be a cry, 'fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of His judgment is come.'"⁴¹

That the hour of judgment was upon them also served as the impetus for the gathering of the elect — the other phase of their missionary outreach. Sidney Rigdon explained:

When the God of heaven sent a messenger to proclaim judgment on the old world, he provided an ark for the safety of the righteous: When Sodom was burned, there was a Zoar provided for Lot and his family . . . and in the last days, when the Lord brings judgment on the world, there will be a Mount Zion, and a Jerusalem, where there will be deliverance.⁴²

If modern Mormons feel that a righteous life is sufficient protection for the troubled times ahead and that it is not where they live, but how, that matters, such was not the thinking in the earliest years. For first-decade disciples, Zion

³⁸Especially good on both substance and style in early Mormon preaching is Barbara J. Higdon, "The Role of Preaching in the Early Latter Day Saint Church, 1830–1846" (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, 1961). The quote is *D&C* 63:58.

³⁹Zygmunt, "Movements and Motives: Some Unresolved Issues in the Psychology of Social Movements," *Human Relations* 25 (1972): 449–67; Beckford, *The Trumpet of Prophecy* (Oxford, England: Blackwell, 1975).

⁴⁰*D&C* 84:117.

⁴¹John Taylor, *The Government of God* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1852), p. 99. While the elders were to proclaim the pending judgments, some apparently undertook the grim task with a little too much relish. Occasionally, Joseph Smith and other leaders would warn against "the uselessness of preaching to the world about great judgments," and instructed them instead "to preach the simple gospel." *HC* 4:11. Perusing the pamphlet and periodical literature for the next few decades suggests that the counsel was slow in taking hold, for there was little shying away from announcing the cataclysmic consequences of gospel rejection. See my article, "Saved or Damned," mentioned in note #3. Modern missionary approaches, however, demonstrate that the early advice has been internalized.

⁴²*The Evening and Morning Star* 2 (January 1834): 126.

was a specific place more than it was a lifestyle, and it was the only spot the Lord had designated as “a defense . . . and a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth.”⁴³ Thus, Joseph Smith urged all to “embrace the everlasting covenant, and flee to Zion before the overflowing scourge overtake you.”⁴⁴ The First Presidency reasoned along similar lines in an 1841 editorial. “This gathering,” they declared, “must take place before the Lord comes to ‘take vengeance upon the ungodly.’”⁴⁵

If sand in the hourglass of time was running out, the Saints were assured that the “great and dreadful day of the Lord” would not dawn until the elect “shall all have come from one end of heaven to the other, and not one (is) left in all nations . . . under heaven, and then and not until then will Christ come.”⁴⁶ Before the Lord rains down his wrath upon the world, all believers must be gathered to the prophetic panoply, Zion. Thus, the Mormon philosophy of and motivation for missions was integrally related to their millenarianism. The elders were to traverse the earth, preaching “nothing but repentance,” to warn the wicked and gather the elect — all because the Day of the Lord, as a day of judgment, was at hand.

We conclude by returning to our original intent — to understand how familiar minds think unfamiliarly. Clearly, Mormons of today are in some ways quite different from their pioneering predecessors. Modern Mormon perceptions of society tend to be more pluralized than polarized, their ideas of judgment more other-worldly than this-worldly, and their feelings of imminence less intense. Furthermore, their conceptions of Zion, the gathering, and the “voice of warning” have greatly expanded and have largely been shorn of their apocalypticism. Even more striking is the extent to which the early Saints, like the prophets of the Old Testament, accentuated the judgments and retribution which would accompany the Lord’s advent. However nuances and subtleties of thought may have varied over the decades, though, Mormons have always maintained an abiding interest in the Second Coming. As James Davidson wrote:

The urge to bring on a day of reckoning — when heaven comes down to earth — is with us still, will always be with us. The lesson seems to be that if we try too hard to hasten that day, we are in peril of losing our humanity. Yet surely we are equally in peril if we choose not to make the attempt at all.⁴⁷

⁴³*D&C* 115:6.

⁴⁴*HC* 1:315–16.

⁴⁵*TS* 2 (January 1841): 276.

⁴⁶*MA* 3 (Nov 1836): 404.

⁴⁷Davidson, *The Logic of Millennial Thought*, p. 297.

JOURNAL OF MORMON HISTORY

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The *Journal of Mormon History*, annual publication of the Mormon History Association, reflects the purposes of the association, "to foster scholarly research and publication in the field of Mormon history."

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Manuscripts should be submitted in duplicate with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should be typed, double-spaced, with footnotes, also double-spaced, in a separate section at the end. Preferred length is fifteen to twenty-five pages, including footnotes. All manuscripts are deposited in the MHA archives after review unless accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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Early Mormonism and Early Christianity: Some Parallels and Their Consequences For the Study of New Religions

By John G. Gager

I am delighted and honored by the invitation from your program committee to deliver the third annual Tanner Lecture on the occasion of this seventeenth annual meeting of the Mormon History Association. I am particularly thankful for the opportunity which this occasion has provided for reflecting about the foundations of my own academic discipline — the study of early Christianity — in a manner which is all too uncommon among academicians, whose ordinary behavior takes them ever more deeply into their own special areas and rarely forces them to examine their discipline in the light of other fields — or to view themselves, as Robert Burns once put it, as other people see us.

I must admit, however, that my enthusiasm about being here is somewhat tempered by a doubled-edged sense of anxiety: anxiety first of all because I stand before you, an audience of experts on Mormonism, as one whose knowledge and understanding of Mormon history has been acquired exclusively in the very recent past; and anxiety also because I suspect that there are very good reasons for the mole-like quality of academics which I described just a moment ago. For whatever we may say about the ultimately therapeutic nature of examining our foundations and seeing ourselves as others see us, there can be no doubt that the experience itself is always uncomfortable, frequently disconcerting, and sometimes painful. I have dealt with my first anxiety by reassuring myself that your interest in my remarks today springs not from what I know about Mormonism but from what I know about early Christianity. As for my second source of anxiety, I have not yet discovered a solution. If my observations about early Mormonism and early Christianity should cause any discom-

John G. Gager is chairman of the Department of Religion at Princeton University. This essay was presented as the Tanner Lecture at the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Mormon History Association at Weber State College, May 8, 1982.

fort or pain, I can only remind you that many learned outside observers of the early Christian movement lie silent and forgotten in their Mediterranean graves, while Christianity itself — no doubt strengthened by what it learned from these observers — survived to live and laugh another day.

But before I begin to speak about my topic proper, it may be useful for me to say a word or two about my own work as a historian of early Christianity. If you were to ask me what I saw as the most distinctive aspects of my approach to early Christianity, I would single out two items for special emphasis.

E. R. Dodds — a transcendently great historian of ancient religion to whose work I will return in a bit — commented in one of his writings that he was interested less in the issues which separated the early Christians from their pagan contemporaries than in the attitudes and experiences which bound them together.¹ Like Dodds, I too am especially interested in those questions and problems which lead to what we might call our common humanity. Concretely, this means that I have rejected the view of one of my former teachers who argued that the primary task of the historian lies in describing the distinctiveness and particularity of historical movements and figures. Put positively, this means that I am no longer inclined to view the relationship between early Christianity and its cultural environment, whether Jewish or pagan, in terms of influences back and forth. It is not enough just to say that Christianity was influenced by apocalyptic Judaism or Platonic philosophy, for the truth of the matter is that there is no unchanging core which accepts or rejects input from the environment. The core itself is part of that environment, changes with it, and is inconceivable apart from it.²

The second distinctive focus of my own work has been in the use of interpretive and explanatory models from the social sciences — primarily social anthropology and social psychology. By applying these models to specific problem areas in the study of early Christianity, I have tried to demonstrate both that early Christianity shares certain basic characteristics with other new religions and that what we are able to learn of religious movements closer to our own time, about which we often have an abundance of information, can be put to use in explaining obscure or intractable problems in religions like early Christianity, where the amount of available information is relatively sparse. Critics of this kind of comparative historical sociology — or, better, sociological historiography — have argued the line that sociologists are concerned with general laws of human behavior whereas the task of historians is to describe specific or even unique events and movements. Other critics contend that such an approach is somehow reductionist, that it reduces religious issues to social forces, or, even worse, that it renders religious beliefs and practices themselves untenable and irrational. My response to these critics is that there is a kind of atheism implicit not only in social scientific approaches but in every other academic discipline as well. But the atheism I have in mind here is what Peter

¹E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety; Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 5.

²Such a view underlies Dodds's *Pagan and Christian* in terms of Christianity's early development outside Palestine. A similar view of early Palestinian Christianity may be found in G. Theissen's *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).

Berger calls "methodological atheism" — by which he simply means that the sociologist *as* sociologist or the historian *as* historian can never appeal to factors or forces which are beyond public inspection and scrutiny.³ But by the same token, the sociologist *as* sociologist has nothing whatever to say about religious explanations of the sociological or historical accounts themselves. In Berger's own words,

sociological theory must, by its own logic, view religion as a human projection, and by the same logic can have nothing to say about the possibility that this projection may refer to something other than the being of its projector. In other words, to say that religion is a human projection [by which he means that it can be fully analyzed and understood according to information available to every observer] does not logically preclude the possibility that the projected meaning may have an ultimate status independent of man.⁴

On this question, historians and sociologists have nothing further to say.

The relevance of Berger's observations to the study of early Mormonism and early Christianity I take to be far-reaching. Most historians — and especially those who lay great emphasis on the objective, value-free character of their work — are thinly-veiled debunkers. In the study of early Christianity this attitude has long been reflected in studies designed to deflate Christian claims about the nature and deeds of Jesus Christ. And in the study of early Mormonism, I have found very much the same sort of attitudes among non-Mormon historians who have sought to discredit Mormonism in general by poking holes, for instance, in the story of Joseph Smith's production of the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham.⁵ Of course, this generates the opposite and equally uncritical response among sympathetic historians of trying to defend the authenticity and accuracy of historical documents and figures, whereas their proper task ought to be the fullest possible explanation of those forces which gave rise to these new religions in the first place and which accounted for their startling growth in a relatively short period of time. In fact, it is precisely to these two fundamental and properly historical issues that I would like to direct our attention in the time remaining.

Let me begin by suggesting that some of the most interesting and fruitful recent developments in the study of early Christianity have resulted from the discovery that this particular new religion shares certain basic characteristics with millenarian movements in general. By recognizing these similarities, and by drawing on studies of early modern and contemporary millenarian movements — here I think of works like Peter Worsley's *The Trumpet Shall Sound*;⁶ K. O. L. Burridge's *New Heaven, New Earth*;⁷ Norman R. Cohn's *Pursuit of the*

³Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1969), p. 180.

⁴Ibid.

⁵See the discussion in Mario S. De Pillis's recent review essay, "Klaus Hansen's True View of Mormonism," *Reviews in American History* 10 (March 1982): 65–71. I remain puzzled by an apparent contradiction between two assertions in the essay. On the one hand, De Pillis chides Hansen for allowing his account to be shaped by the old questions of partisanship with regard to Mormonism itself (p. 66). On the other hand, he goes on to add that it is disingenuous for him "to assert that the historian is interested not in whether Mormonism is true or false . . ." (ibid).

⁶*The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of "Cargo" Cults in Melanesia* (2nd, augmented ed; New York: Schocken Books, 1968).

⁷*New Heaven, New Earth: A Study of Millenarian Activities* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969).

Millennium,⁸ and Sylvia Thrupp's volume, *Millennial Dreams in Action*⁹ — it has been possible to open entirely new vistas on the underlying dynamics that gave rise to the early Christian movement as a powerful new religion. I would argue that much the same potential for new insights could be discovered by a thorough-going analysis of early Mormonism as a millenarian movement — that is, as a religion whose basic source of energy and momentum derived from its sense of being the chosen people of God living in the final days of history. This self-understanding — which lies at the heart of all millenarian movements and distinguishes them from all other forms of religious expressions — must be seen as the source of that explosive and transformative power which is characteristic of both early Christianity and early Mormonism.

Of course, I recognize that the work of Klaus J. Hansen, in his *Quest for Empire*,¹⁰ and John F. Wilson, in his Tanner Lecture of last year,¹¹ have made important steps in this direction, not just in pointing to the millenarian enthusiasm of the early movement but also in arguing that its millenarian character requires an altogether different kind of historiography. To their observations, I would simply add a footnote or two.

First, we need to recognize why it is that the millenarian origins of Mormonism are just now coming into focus as a central characteristic of the early years. I begin with the assertion that the inevitable fate of all millenarian movements is failure and collapse. By this I mean that they either — and the majority would certainly fall into this class — disintegrate and disappear when their millennial expectations remain unfulfilled or — and here I think of both Christianity and Mormonism — they cease to be millenarian in the strict sense. Those movements which survive the trauma of non-fulfillment usually do so in rather predictable ways, some of which I have tried to elucidate in the case of early Christianity.¹² I would argue that many of them apply equally to early Mormonism:

- they generate a series of rational explanations for the non-arrival of the millennium;¹³
- they reach out and seek to persuade others of the truth of their religion;

⁸*Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (Rev. ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

⁹*Millennial Dreams in Action: Studies in Revolutionary Religious Movements* (New York: Schocken Books, 1970).

¹⁰*The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1970). To this must now be added Hansen's more recent work, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981). In his review of Hansen's volume referred to above, Mario S. De Pillis holds that Hansen has understated the millenarian character of early Mormonism. The issue, I think, is not that Hansen underestimates Mormonism as a millenarian movement but that his focus was directed toward other issues in this particular volume.

¹¹"Some Comparative Perspectives on the Early Mormon Movement and the Church-State Question, 1830–1845," *Journal of Mormon History* 8 (1981): 63–77.

¹²See my *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975), pp. 37–49 for a discussion of cognitive dissonance theory in relation to the non-fulfillment of millennial expectations. The pioneering work in this area remains *When Prophecy Fails* by L. Festinger, H. W. Riecken, and S. Schacter (New York: Harper and Row, 1956).

¹³See Hansen, *Quest for Empire*, pp. 18–20.

- they redirect their energies away from preparing for the End and toward the development of institutional structures;
- and finally, as an essential part of this reorientation, they either forget or suppress the memory of their millenarian origins, for it is precisely in the transformation of millennial energies into other forms of action that we can locate the key to survival and success, on the one hand, or disintegration and collapse on the other.

My second footnote concerns a cluster of issues surrounding the question of the social make-up of millenarian movements. My starting point here is an observation of Peter Worsley in *The Trumpet Shall Sound*: "I am quite unrepentant, therefore, about cleaving to my basic assumption that *the millenarian movements that have been historically important . . . are movements of the disinherited.*"¹⁴ Hansen has spelled out the truth of this observation for the earliest followers of Joseph Smith,¹⁵ while my own work has tried to do as much for the early followers of Jesus.¹⁶

But having made this basic observation, we are forced to move a step further in recognizing that millenarian movements will not arise wherever we find disinherited persons or communities. Studies like those of Worsley and Burridge have shown that the disinherited become mobilized only under certain kinds of pre-millenarian conditions.¹⁷ Early Christianity, we know, arose at a time of intense messianic activity — with Jesus being but one of several messianic claimants in first-century Palestine. The nineteenth-century analogue, I take it, would be found in what historians have called the "Burned-Over District" of New York State where Smith's work first began.¹⁸ Rodney Stark's recent work, which seeks to demonstrate that cultic movements are most likely to form and flourish precisely at times of cultural uncertainty, when traditional religious institutions are in decline and at their weakest, would seem to add significant theoretical weight to those who have argued that the religious revivalism in Smith's time and region must be seen against the backdrop of a general decline in traditional religious beliefs and institutions.¹⁹

The third and final step in treating the social make-up of millenarian movements concerns the emergence of what I would call a distinctively millenarian lifestyle. Invariably, millenarian cults define themselves in opposition to

¹⁴Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound*, xlii. Italics in the original.

¹⁵Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*, pp. 2, 41.

¹⁶Gager, *Kingdom and Community*, pp. 22–28, where use is made of relative deprivation theory.

¹⁷Perhaps the most important of these conditions, though it will not be discussed here, is the emergence of the prophet. See Burridge, *New Heaven, New Earth*, pp. 11–14, 153–64, and Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*, pp. 10–22.

¹⁸See especially the work of W. R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800–1850* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1950).

¹⁹See R. Stark and W. S. Bainbridge, "Secularization and Cult Formation in the Jazz Age," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 20 (1981): 360–73. Stark's recent work in this area represents a fundamental challenge to all previous views of secularization as the inevitable concomitant or result of modernization. In this connection we may note the following observation of Klaus Hansen: "Mormonism appeared on the American religious scene at precisely that moment when external religious authority, both intellectually and institutionally, was in headlong retreat . . ." (*Mormonism and the American Experience*, p. 20)

prevailing values and codes. They do so precisely because — as the disinherited — they expect the coming Kingdom to bring with it a dramatic reversal of present values and status. Early Christianity's promise that the "first will be last and the last first!" is utterly typical of millenarian movements in their early stages. The notorious antinomian behavior of such movements is thus not an accidental trait but a perfectly consistent manifestation of their underlying logic and structure. Unrestrained prophecy, visions, revelations, and new patterns of sexual activity — including polygamy — are precisely what we would expect of a millenarian lifestyle in nineteenth-century America — *and* precisely what we would expect to disappear in those millenarian movements that survive the initial rush of enthusiasm, that cease to be properly millenarian and become important religious traditions.

In my concluding remarks I would like to address the issue of the success of Mormonism — and to do so by returning to E. R. Dodds, this time to his analysis of the success of early Christianity. Here we begin with a curious paradox that has plagued historians of both movements. One part of the task of doing history itself — but also, I would argue, part of the debunking instinct of most historians — is the task of stressing similarities between early Mormonism or Christianity and their respective environments. Perhaps as a reaction to claims from within the movements that their ideologies are utterly distinctive and without historical precedent, historians have tended to present a counter-image according to which little if anything about the movements can be seen as unique or innovative. Here is where the paradox arises. For if early Mormonism or early Christianity are merely warmed-over versions of mid-nineteenth or mid-third century culture, then we are at a loss to explain why these particular movements, and not their many contemporary competitors, not only survived but also flourished in such a remarkable fashion. In other words, the more we are able to demonstrate fundamental similarities between these movements and their surrounding cultures and the more we must dismiss their own self-understanding in relation to their cultural environment, the more we find ourselves unable to explain their success.

At this point, I would like to propose that a solution to this paradox may lie in Dodds's comments about the role of ideological exclusiveness in attracting new converts to the early Christian movement. Without in any way discounting the many and important resemblances between the Christian movement and the Greco-Roman culture of the Roman empire, Dodds makes Christianity's self-understanding as a religiously and ideologically exclusive faith — exclusive at the conscious level, no matter what we as historians may see happening at an unconscious level — into an essential factor in its eventual success:

I will end this chapter by mentioning briefly some of the psychological conditions which favoured its growth and contributed to its victory.

In the first place, its *very exclusiveness*, its refusal to concede any value to alternative forms of worship, which nowadays is often felt to be a weakness, was in the circumstances of the time a source of strength. The religious tolerance which was the normal Greek and Roman practice had resulted by accumulation in a bewildering mass of alternatives. There were too many cults, too many mysteries, too many philosophies of life to choose from: you could pile one religious insurance on another, yet not feel safe. Christianity made a clean sweep. It lifted the burden of freedom from the shoulders of

the individual: one choice, one irrevocable choice, and the road to salvation was clear. Pagan critics might mock at Christian intolerance, but in an age of anxiety any 'totalist' creed exerts a powerful attraction. . . .²⁰

With these comments in mind we may return briefly to the Burned-Over District, to the religious confusion of the mid-nineteenth century, and to the survival and success of Mormonism.

My first observation is that these words of Dodds point us directly to Joseph Smith's vision of 1820, when he had prayed to God for guidance in deciding which of the competing religious movements were true.²¹ The answer, of course, was that Smith should "join none of them for they were all wrong . . . all their creeds were an abomination in God's sight; all professors were corrupt . . ." I take this foundational vision to be more than just a conversion story and more than the basis for Smith's own religious authority. At its heart, this account proclaims the radical *discontinuity* of Mormonism with the Christianity of its own time. Therein, according to Dodds's view, lay much of its appeal.

This sense of discontinuity, however, goes well beyond Christianity in the nineteenth century, for it expresses — again at the conscious level of ideological self-understanding — a far deeper sense of discontinuity with historical Christianity itself. In the case of early Christianity, as Dodds analyzes it, ideological exclusiveness took the form of a NO! to all forms of Greco-Roman religious solutions. The analogy in the case of Mormonism, in order to be complete, would have to take the form of a NO! to all forms of Christian religious solutions.

The evidence for this NO! lies not just in Smith's vision of 1820, not just in his demotion of the Christian Bible by virtue of his claim that it had been improperly translated, but equally in the foundational myth of the prophet Lehi. By having Lehi and his sons depart from Jerusalem before the destruction of the city in 587 B.C. — a destruction traditionally understood as brought about by Israel's iniquities — the line of descent to Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon is safeguarded not only against any implication in those iniquities but also against any participation in the troubled history of later Judaism and Christianity. This symbolic meaning of Lehi's departure from Jerusalem around 600 B.C. is reduplicated, I would argue, in the account of Christ's preaching of his true gospel to the descendants of Lehi in the New World. The true Christian message is thus transmitted to the New World not by any human agents, not by any representatives of historical Christianity — who are, after all, an abomination in the sight of God — but by the risen Christ himself.

What this symbolic discontinuity means in terms of Mormon historiography is that it is not really adequate to speak of early Mormonism as a return to

²⁰Dodds, *Pagan and Christian*, p. 133. Italics added.

²¹For discussion of the several versions of this first vision, see Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*, pp. 22–24 and p. 221, n 30. The only more radical statement of discontinuity that I know of in Christian history is to be found in the Gnostic documents from Nag Hammadi in Egypt, where different Gnostic communities trace their spiritual origins back to the time before creation itself, thereby avoiding any involvement in the story of Eden and the origins of evil in human history.

early Christianity. For if I am not mistaken, early Mormonism sought to short-circuit all historical continuity with Christianity and Judaism and thereby to eliminate both as competitors for the claim to represent the true people of God. Thus I would have serious doubts concerning Hansen's approving reference to the words of Fawn Brodie, that Mormonism was "intended to be to Christianity what Christianity was to Judaism: that is a reform and a consummation."²²

Finally, just as early Christianity gradually modified its exclusivist stance as it moved into the mainstream of Roman society and culture, the same has been true of Mormonism. But concurrent with this movement we must take note, in the case of both religions, of three accompanying reactions which may be seen as virtually inevitable.

The first I would define as a counter-movement directed precisely at tendencies toward accommodation and assimilation; this counter-movement, typified in early Christianity by the figure of Tertullian, insists — in the end unsuccessfully — on preserving the full measure of cultural distinctiveness for the developing religion.

The second reaction, ironically, takes the form of defining heresy, or at least one form of heresy, in terms of those groups within the religion which adhere most closely to the original practices and beliefs of the early movement; by the late second century, those groups which still insisted on circumcision and Sabbath observance for all converts had come to be seen as heretical.

The third reaction, closely related to the second, arises in response to the crisis prompted by the disappearance of the first generation of charismatic leaders — i.e., Jesus and the original disciples. There is evidence from the second century which points to a dispute between two groups concerning the nature of legitimate authority within the developing church — on the one side stood those who defined legitimate authority in terms of spiritual "descent" from the apostles, while on the other side stood those who looked to James, the brother of Jesus, and other members of Jesus's family, as fountainheads of legitimate religious authority.²³

²²Cited in Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*, p. 18. Similar views are expressed throughout the literature on early Mormonism.

²³For a discussion of this much-disputed issue, see the essay by H. von Campenhausen, "The Authority of Jesus' Relatives in the Early Church," in *Jerusalem and Rome: The Problem of Authority in the Early Church*, ed. by H. Chadwick and H. von Campenhausen (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 3–19.

Faithful History: Hazards and Limitations

By Melvin T. Smith

I am here tonight to speak for history; and for historians who ought to be free to do what historians can do; and who ought to be subject to no greater hazards than the queries and comments and jibes of competent colleagues. Historians' salvation ought not to depend on either the content of their history nor its conclusions, any more than dentists' exaltation depends on the absence of cavities among their candy-consuming clientele. I am also here to speak for faithful historians who want to help their church, not hurt it, to support faith, not destroy it, and to stabilize testimonies, not undermine them. I am also here to present one faithful historian's personal insights into the problems and hazards of faithful history.

I am grateful for the excellent and challenging scholarship of non-Mormon colleagues. Yet no matter how insightful and helpful and informative history written by nonbelievers is, these scholars rarely, if ever, reveal and explicate those special and immediate qualities that made believing Mormons and Latter-day Saints what they were and what they still are today.

My efforts tonight are an attempt to foster scholarly excellence by helping to unshackle our Mormon historians as completely as possible. Mormon scholars cannot afford to be seen as "fighting against God" simply because they are professional historians. It requires unfailing energy, dedicated research, and whole-hearted commitment to produce good history; yet these attributes, without scholarly integrity, produce only sounding brass and tinkling cymbals

Melvin T. Smith is director of the Utah State Historical Society and immediate past-president of the Mormon History Association. This essay was his presidential address to the association, given at the Seventeenth Annual Meeting, Weber State College, May 8, 1982.

of history whose "trumpet maketh an uncertain sound," if I may paraphrase scriptures freely. Tonight I offer my answer to the question: "Canst thou by searching find out God?"

"Faithful history" generally defined is history that promotes faith in God and the divinity of His leaders and institutions. I raise the question immediately, can history really do that?

Problems of faithful history are not peculiar to Mormons but are common to all deeply religious believers who look to history for answers about God. Yet there are, for Mormons, it seems to me, two particular difficulties which compound these basic problems: The first is the historic setting of Mormonism; and the second is the all-pervasive nature of religion in the lives of faithful Mormons.

Let me elaborate on the first point. It was Joseph Smith who early on set the rules for witnessing to the faith and to his story of the Restoration. By his own claims, his first witness was spiritual, direct from divine sources. His movement began with his literal understanding of the promise that, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God," which led to his "First Vision," direct visitations from heavenly beings and revelations from divine sources. It culminated in the Book of Mormon promise that the reader should ask God in prayer to manifest the truth of it by the power of the Holy Ghost. Other scriptures carry similar promises. Joseph Smith's first and prime witness to the divine was from God himself. It is a promise still in force for the faithful Latter-day Saint, a witness believed to be so powerful that only those who receive both the comforter and second comforter in their fullness can become sons of perdition. The point to be made is that Joseph Smith claimed God is the prime witness for God.

On the other hand, Smith also elected to use historic witnesses to verify the divinity of his mission; his witnesses included his own story, the three and eight witnesses to the Book of Mormon, the Book of Mormon itself, and its historic record, and scores of other historic testators including twelve apostles as "special witnesses," and seventies and all who have a "testimony" of Jesus.

I am not here to present any definitive case for Mormon history or theology on these two issues, nor to argue whether Joseph's rules for witnessing are good or bad. I rather wish simply to note the stage they set for the faithful of the Restoration, because these perceptions of how one knows divine truth determine for the faithful how they should view history and what history is supposed to be; namely, a witness to God's will and ways with mankind.

A second problem for Mormons lies in the dominion of religion in their lives. Religion is everywhere all the time; and it explains everything. Believing Mormons hold that to God all things are spiritual. And since for them the spirit of God reaches everywhere, they, and all people, will be judged both for their works and their thoughts. For believing Mormon historians that sense of accountability is very real.

Such perceptions become problems because of the context they give to a believer's understanding of what history is and what it can and should do, and because whenever one brings faithful predispositions to his perception of historical facts, those facts take on the biases of his faith and the sense of reality that that faith gives him. My own story is a case in point.

I was born faithful, I don't know why, but I was. At least, I don't remember when I didn't believe the Mormon Church was true. I have been told it had something to do with the alkali in the water in Cowley, Wyoming; or, perhaps because Dad was born in Bountiful, Utah, in 1895, or because Rachel Tuttle, his mother, was born there in 1856, a daughter of Newton Tuttle who spent the winter of 1857–58 keeping Johnston's Army out in the cold. It may have been because dad's father was born on Morrow Bone Creek near Adam-on-di-Ahman in August 1838, during the Missouri persecutions, and then came west with Brigham Young in 1848 as a ten-year-old orphan; or even because my great-grandfather, Samuel H. Smith, was one of the eight witnesses to the Book of Mormon, a charter member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, one of its first missionaries, and an 1844 martyr.

On the other hand, maybe it had more to do with my mother's being born in "the land of Goshen," southwest of Utah Lake in 1895, or because her father and mother, Emanuel and Mary Thomas, had faithfully failed in their homesteading ventures near Monticello a few years before. I don't know. It may even have been because I was the fifth of ten children and the fourth son of those first-generation pioneers, Heman Tuttle and Mary Edetha Thomas Smith. It might even have had something to do with the date of my birth, June 15, 1928. After all, the Great Depression happened soon after. But then, I don't really think so. You see, my younger brother Dean was born October 27, 1929, and he was no more faithful than I.

Anyhow, I just grew up knowing that God was in his heaven and all would be right with the world if I lived righteously, prayed for our leaders, and voted Democratic when I grew up. In our depression-day family prayers, Heber J. Grant and Franklin Delano Roosevelt got equal billing.

I do not remember learning why crops failed some years and prospered others, though I knew why — because the Lord blessed or withheld blessings and that because of the farmers' faithfulness. Sickness and health, life and death, all had simple explanations: there was a law upon which all blessings were predicated, the earth was the Lord's and the fullness thereof, and we were his stewards. Even if we were faithful and still failed, God's ways were not man's ways and whatever injustice we might see here would be redressed in the next world. In those days I knew there were explanations for everything, even when explanations had not yet been given. And where explanations were insufficient, there was that clever devil, ever vigilant in his mission to lead us faithful ones astray, such as the time old "Babe" our eighteen-hundred-pound work mare stepped on my toe, protected only by a canvas-topped tennis shoe with a hole in it, and I let go with expletives more expressive than shucks, heck, darn or even dang — which by the way I must have learned from some faithful Saint somewhere, somehow.

Life was simple then at least the explanations of it were. And while we in the Big Horn Basin did not have the all-seeing eye of God symbol among us, God was very omnipresent. In my life then, there were good guys and bad guys, and as the importance of a concept depended more on who said it than what was said, church leaders' counsel was sought and followed.

In those years for me life was God's gift. My task was to seek first the

Kingdom of God and to become God-like. Since the glory of God was intelligence, I began reading the "best books." And while the "standard works" were more than history, they were that also. So I set out to become an informed faithful historian. It was not hard for me to accept the literalness of the flood in history; after all, couldn't an all-powerful God do anything, and didn't the earth need baptism if it were to become a celestial body in time? And besides, when thou canst believe, all things are possible.

My best books included Joseph Fielding Smith's *Way to Perfection* and *Essentials in Church History*. They explained God's plan, or history, and he was, after all, an apostle. Then there was Talmage's *Articles of Faith* and *Jesus The Christ* which I'd heard had been written in the Salt Lake Temple itself. And Parley P. Pratt's *Voice of Warning* and *Key to Theology*.

I read another book in 1947 called *No Man Knows My History*. Well, it was just as bad and biased as my Mormon English teacher was supposed to have said it was. Since I had been advised that Fawn Brodie was unequivocally on the devil's side of the line, it was easy in those years to read her history that way. In fact, I saw all historical facts about the way I had been taught to perceive them.

In 1948, full of faithful history, I arrived in Boston for a twenty-six-month mission for the Mormon Church, where I preached on Boston Common, lectured to the learned of Amherst College, Williams College, and the University of Massachusetts. I had gone to teach and not to be taught; and I can assure you they taught me very little; though I did learn that there are certain hazards in tracting a girls' dormitory at Mt. Holyoke girls college for a place to spend the night. The cops who picked us up were very understanding. They probably concluded that we were throwbacks to our polygamous forbears in Utah, out proselytizing in those fertile vineyards for a few more wives.

It was at this time that I began to realize how important history was to my witness of the Restoration. I told of the "Three Witnesses, Eight Witnesses," and other faithful Saints' testimonies. I even slipped in a little extract or two from Eusebius and Tertullian and a line or so from Josephus. As I look back, I can see that I was far more impressed than were my listeners. I remember using Mormon history also, such as the miracle of the seagulls eating the crickets in 1848. It did not seem like much of a miracle to me if the seagulls were right at hand; and this Wyoming cowboy did not know then that seagulls were native to Utah. So, what did I do? Check out the facts? That really didn't occur to me, for after all, I'd heard the story in Sunday School and I had read about it in the *Improvement Era*. So I reported a real miracle. My seagulls came all the way from San Francisco Bay to gulp Mormon crickets and save the Saints.

I am still amazed at and embarrassed by my naivete and ignorance. I recall an exchange with some history professors at Williams College, wherein I was giving words of wisdom to Brigham Young that I later discovered belonged to Voltaire and others.

I returned to ranching in 1950, then joined the US Navy in 1952 for a four-year hitch. During those six years, I digested literally scores of faithful Mormon history and doctrinal commentaries, mainly by church leaders. With those resources I had a fairly awesome battery of "faithful" facts with which to ply my "faithful history."

Then in 1956 I entered college, where after one semester of study I transferred from vocational agriculture to social studies. Yes, John Taggart Hinckley was a good history teacher. I began to read more history books with better history in the books I read. I graduated in 1959. A year later I had an MA in American Studies from the University of Wyoming. Yet I still challenged history teachers who questioned Mormon orthodoxy as I saw it. Professor T. A. Larsen learned from me that Jacob, Nephi's brother, *had* left the door open for the practice of polygamy when he had God say, "If I will raise up seed unto me I will command." Besides, that was no way for my professor to talk about my polygamous grandfather.

In 1960, soon after I began teaching college in Powell, Wyoming, I realized that I was not a competent historian; a good teacher maybe, but not a professional historian. I did not like being embarrassed by not knowing history, especially when I had to teach it. So after three years of college teaching, I decided to go to Brigham Young University to pursue a Ph.D. in "faithful history." It was there that I began to study history in depth — intensely, painfully. It was there also that I became aware that faithful history did not always tell me what its adherents claimed it did. I remember confronting contradictions I saw in my faithful history perception of reality. The righteous did not always prosper, good people had insurmountable problems, and church leaders were not really omniscient. How very naive I was. My careful research revealed to me that many of Ezra Taft Benson's talks in the 1960s relied heavily on information that came straight from Robert Welch's *Blue Book* and *Black Book*, published by the John Birch Society. I saw clearly that poor history was a poor witness to the word of God for anyone, including church leaders.

I remember the long talks we graduate students had at BYU. We sought to rationalize between history and faith, to harmonize what we knew from one source with what we seemed to know from another. The specter of our faith was always present in our discussion of history. We could not separate the two.

It was at this time also that I asked myself, "Melvin, what do you really know for certain about *God* and ultimate *truth*?" My teaching a Sunday School class in the Oak Hills Third Ward was as relevant to those queries as were my classes in "Colonial History," from Milt Backman, or the "New Nation" from Gene Campbell, or "America in the 20th Century" from Dick Poll — each of whom has preceded me in this office and assignment.

Visions of my thirty-five years of faithful history inquiry flooded past me for days and weeks. Finally, there I stood naked or least with little more than a fig leaf of knowledge to cover my nakedness. It was quite an experience, which time will not permit me to relate in detail now. I discovered that my brand of "faithful history" and its perceptions of reality simply could not withstand the impact of the tree of knowledge. I discovered too that faithful history or otherwise had taught me almost nothing about God, "which thing I had never supposed."

I knew that Joseph Smith had used history as a witness to his divine mission; I discovered that Smith was not a historian. When he proclaimed, "No man knows my history," he could have included himself. I would guess that

Brodie and others knew and know more about his history than he did. Whether they knew more about God is a different question. However, I learned that when one asks history to be his witness, it had better be good history. It is on this issue that Smith's witness to the Restoration is most vulnerable.

With these discoveries, my transition from Eden began; and that trip has proven to be bittersweet. I have often and longingly looked back at Paradise, only to find the gate blocked. And while I have seen neither cherubim nor a flaming sword, I think I have felt the latter on occasion.

On the other hand, I found the world of history offered far more than thorns and thistles. In fact, most of the fruits from these trees of human knowledge proved sweet indeed, for history began telling me about myself, about my place in time and space, and about my society and my people. I am personally grateful to Juanita Brooks, not just because she had the courage to look at one of the worst Utah Mormon tragedies (the Mountain Meadows Massacre), honestly, and thereby help me understand it, but because she, in doing that, helped me understand my true believing self. Frankly, I am haunted by that story, not only because my people and my church were involved, but because as a true believer I could understand how they could do it; and because I sense that I might have been involved, as the true believer I was, had time and circumstances been right. I am thankful for the judicious leaven of good history in my life today.

I suspect my own experiences are not unusual, apart from some extremes, from many of the faithful who have become historians; for behind the dilemma of every faithful historian is a fundamental presumption that history really does somehow witness to God. The faithful who see themselves as historians have dealt with that dilemma with varying degrees of sophistication. On one end of the scale sits the dogmatic historian, who sees all issues in black and white. God is on one side; the devil is on the other. God prophesies, and history verifies. These writers present the historic Joseph Smith as they perceive a prophet of God to have been, not as he actually was. Therefore, these writers' perceptions of what a prophet is determine what historically the prophet was; that is, they create Joseph Smith in their own image of a prophet.

Further along the scale are those who choose to write only the good things about pioneer forebears. Mrs. Kate Carter produced many classic examples in her monumental works on Utah pioneers. She is reported to have said, "I never put anything in my books that is detrimental to our pioneer forebears." Her comments were aimed in part at Juanita Brooks who that night shared the speaker's stand with her. Mrs. Brooks replied, "Neither do I, I simply leave it there."

Still other students of history argue that the facts are never wholly known and that everyone is biased anyway. Therefore all man-derived history is inaccurate. To correct these biases, these writers seek to be inspired both in their selection of data and in their interpretation of historic facts. They hope through inspiration to come to know what the facts of history really mean. Thus, for these people, the most faithful and purest Saint would be the best historian.

Some faithful scholars claim that the real historic persons, especially reli-

gious leaders, are revealed correctly through their most positive image. Brigham Young as father projected quite a different image than Brigham Young as territorial governor. Yet both are the historic Brother Brigham.

Finally, there are faithful historians who are wholly integrated into the professional history community. They recognize that their own credibility as historians depends on the calibre of their scholarship. They argue that there is no disharmony between the "truths" of history and the "truths" of faith. They believe that personal testimonies and institutional credibility are served best by accurate, complete histories. These scholars see good history as a useful tool for their church and church leaders. It does not "shake their faith" to learn from history that "prophets," not to mention bishops, apostles, and Relief Society presidents, have been less than perfect.

I have identified with each of these positions, though presently I feel much more comfortable with the latter than with the former types of faithful historians. However, I see a bigger problem with faithful history than those noted in these brief examples. The problem lies in the presumption that somehow the study of people can be witness to God. My dilemma rests in my perception of the finiteness of humanity on the one hand and the infiniteness of God on the other.

To help resolve that problem, I am suggesting another definition for faithful history; that is, history which in some degree presumes to *prove* or *disprove* the infinite or some quality or attribute of it. By this definition, one who writes to *disprove* the divinity of Joseph Smith's mission is just as much a faithful historian as is the believer who writes to *prove* his claims.

For me, faithful history as a *kind* of history is a semantic contradiction, since history can neither *prove* or *disprove* divinity. Those who attempt to prove or disprove God with history are *using* history for predetermined purposes. For this reason their efforts always lack objectivity no matter which side of the issue they come down on. To use history to *prove* that Joseph Smith is God's prophet or that Brigham Young, not Joseph Smith III, was God's choice for his successor, is fruitless. It is like telling a hair-raising story to a bald-headed man. I do not mean, however, that it is not important to study the history and the behavior of these people and their institutions. That work is very important indeed.

Let me ask you to look at another option. We historians may be best served by admitting that there may be sources of knowledge and truth that are simply not subject to empirical, historical scrutiny. I am referring to such phenomena as inspiration, revelation, intuition, impressions, faith, etc. I am not saying that historians must believe these things; I am only asking that historians allow them as options to history as sources of knowledge and truth, as means by which humans may come to know personally aspects of a spiritual reality as certainly as they may know verifiable historical data. *Perhaps* by such means people can actually know God, His will and ways, His history. *Perhaps* by these means, humans can have a superior understanding of ultimate reality, of life and its meaning. And, if they can, perhaps such knowledge will ever be beyond the scrutiny of history, experiment and laboratory verification. I would conclude therefore that the proper study of *history* is mankind, not God.

I also am suggesting that we historians admit to ourselves how really limited the tools of history are. Our research is never complete, our facts are always limited, our conclusions are always tentative. Even the best histories, the most definitive studies, are only a small part of the whole picture of humankind, only a small portion of all that is known about human beings. Look at the work of psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists, geneticists, paleo-anthropologists, biologists, astro-physicists, political scientists, *ad infinitum*. How little of even the finite do we historians know, let alone the infinite.

While all history has these limitations, faithful history has additional hazards. It is noted facetiously that one might find his job status tenuous, and one likely will offend the faithful. But most of all, the faithful historian will produce poor history, because faithful history misdirects the historian's attention. Instead of being primarily concerned that he produce the best history possible from his historic data, however finite their message may be, the faithful historian finds himself concerned that his history be witness to truth in the grand scheme of life. It is that concern that severely biases his end product.

Additionally, the faithful historian often fears the criticism of church leaders and lay persons more than he does that of colleagues. Yet the impact of the former is usually destructive of scholarship, while the critiques of his colleague are vital to it. The historian's professional critics must be his peers, not his prophets.

Another point must be made on the limitations of history. We historians work only with historical data, no matter who our source may be. There is a clear difference between the witness Joseph Smith claimed he had in the Sacred Grove — of God to him — and the witness from him to us in his own story. The first would have been divine; the second is historic. Even when we allow that divine beings visited the Prophet, we must remember that a mortal, finite being received the message and transmitted to it us by the very human medium of language with all its human limitations. What we historians receive is Joseph's witness, not God's.

It is not easy for believing historians to study the data of history in their laboratories free of the biases of their faith. But to be professional historians and to produce quality history, they must do just that. It may help us to remember that our system of inquiry called "history" is simply too finite to measure whatever divinity may exist in any prophet's statement. Our history instruments simply won't pick up that kind of message.

I emphasize again that history cannot scrutinize the things of God; therefore faithful historians should not worry about being biased against God, nor should they worry about whether or not their historical truths are in harmony with revealed truths. I know of no scripture or any statement by Joseph Smith or by a more recent prophet that declares Saints become sons of perdition by denying the witness of history. I suppose historians can take some comfort in that.

I am asking that we view ourselves as free to produce the best history we can, without fear of what it tells us or fear that our history can build or destroy faith in God. After all, we historians did not create the past. We merely try to read it. Nor should we be asked to research and write history in a context where

our labors are seen as continually under God's scrutiny. It is bad enough to have colleagues take one to task, let alone the Almighty.

There are two remaining issues that need brief attention. The first deals with historical biases. We never wholly escape bias in producing history; and I am not so sure we should, since history is always unfinished, and since we perceive and act upon the data of history individually. History may be a case where the whole picture is in fact greater and more accurate than the sum of its parts. One historian's biases can and in time will moderate and correct other historians' biases. As a composite, historians will in time produce fairly judicious and accurate histories. Besides, human history is always subject to review and to revision. It is God's which is viewed as "one eternal round." To disagree with another historian is one thing, but to disagree with God is a wholly different matter. *And that is the faithful historian's dilemma!*

Which brings me to my final point, the uses of history. Faithful history, defined as faith-promoting history, is not a kind of history; it is a use of history, and too often a misuse or abuse of it. It is well to remind ourselves that we have little control over how history will be used, even that we write ourselves; yet everyone uses history of some kind to make his accommodation with the world as it seems to him. It is our professional obligation to give all of these people the best history we can. We ask in return only that they neither abuse it nor us.

On the other hand, those faithful who are by choice historians should also feel free to use their histories as they wish. They may use them to support their church and to make it better. They may use them to become theologians or philosophers, wherein they combine the insights of history with the wisdom of tradition and the witnesses of God, and science, and their own experiences. They may use them for political or social or economic objectives. They may use them to help make their own lives whole and meaningful. But what is needed for all these uses is "quality" history, not "faithful" history.

It is not the historians' burden to bear witness to God. Believers have "special witnesses" for that, who ought, it could be suggested, to provide the faithful with a "witness" more substantive than warmed over, inaccurate, "faithful history."

I conclude by quoting from Job, chapter 11, verses 7-9:

Canst thou by searching find out God?
canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do?
deeper than hell; what canst thou know?

The measure thereof is longer than the earth,
and broader than the sea.

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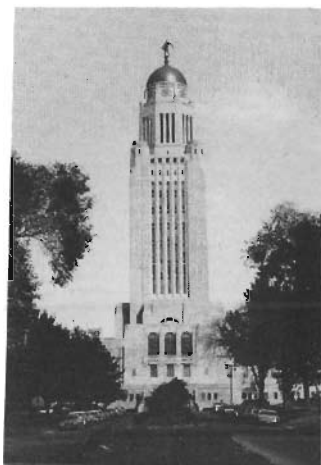
Mormon Moderne: Latter-day Saint Architecture, 1925–1945

By Paul L. Anderson

About ten years ago, while reading a book on religious architecture published in Europe in the late 1930s or '40s, I came across a rather startling passage. I recall the author stating that to the best of his knowledge there were only two truly modern churches in all of America: Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple near Chicago and the "Church of the Latter-day Saints" in Glendale, California. Having grown up a Mormon in nearby Pasadena, California, I was surprised that I had never heard of so important a building. Later I found the building, already sold to another church, but since that time I have not been able to find the book again.

Of course, the author of this elusive book was wrong. There were other modern church buildings in America. But his statement reflects the fact that modern architecture from the middle 1920s to World War II was overwhelmingly secular, an aesthetic of exuberantly decorated skyscrapers, streamlined factories and schools, and stripped-down classical public buildings. For religious structures, Americans continued to choose the Gothic and colonial styles, with an occasional Renaissance or Byzantine scheme for variety. This preference was shared by Latter-day Saints in the 1920s, who favored the colonial style but also found Gothic acceptable. The scarcity of modern church buildings in America makes it all the more surprising that in the late 1930s several LDS architects experimented with the new styles and actually constructed more than three dozen church buildings in various modernistic modes.

Paul L. Anderson, of Salt Lake City, is an architect and architectural historian, currently working on a history of Latter-day Saint architecture. An earlier version of this paper was given at the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Mormon History Association, Weber State College, Ogden, Utah, May 1982.



Nebraska State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska (Paul L. Anderson Collection)

Hollywood Stake Tabernacle and Wilshire Ward, Los Angeles, California (LDS Archives Collection)

The new architectural ideas that appeared in the late 1920s and 1930s were part of a second wave of modernism in America and the LDS Church. The first wave had come before the turn of the century in the work of Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, and several contemporaries. The masterful Alberta Temple design of 1912 introduced the influence of Wright to Mormon architecture, opening the way for many meetinghouses in a similar style. But by the 1920s, the careers of Sullivan and most of his modernist contemporaries had ended, and Wright's influence had waned as his work was disrupted by a series of personal crises and travels abroad. More traditional American architects found themselves almost without modern competitors. Bertram Goodhue was something of an exception, but his modernism, less radical than Wright's, used simplified historical forms such as the great domed tower of the 1922 Nebraska State Capitol and the blocky pyramidal roof of the 1924 Los Angeles Public Library.¹ Goodhue's influence appeared in a few Mormon buildings by Pope and Burton, architects who had been among Wright's ardent admirers during the previous decade. The University Ward in Salt Lake City of 1924 resembles a Goodhue design, as does the magnificent Hollywood Stake Tabernacle and Wilshire Ward of 1927–28, a poured-in-place concrete structure whose tower seems to be a modified miniature of the Nebraska Capitol.

The Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs of 1925, a world's fair of modern design, helped crystallize the new architectural ideas that had been developing in Europe.² Three general varieties of modern architecture

¹Many fine drawings and photographs of Goodhue's buildings are reproduced in Charles Harris Whitaker, ed., *Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, Architect and Master of Many Arts* (New York: Press of the American Institute of Architects, Inc., 1925).

²A twelve-volume illustrated catalogue of the architecture and exhibits of the Paris Exposition has been reprinted as *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes, 1925* (New York: Garland, 1977). Volumes 2 and 3 on architecture and architectural sculpture are particularly relevant to this paper. Plates 69 and 89 in Volume 2 illustrate possible design sources for the tabernacles in Rupert, Idaho, and Honolulu, Hawaii.

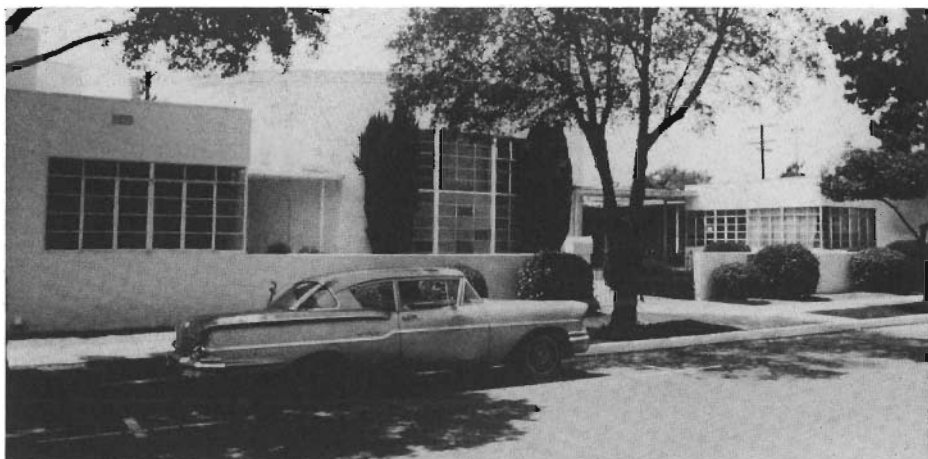


Wasatch Ward, Salt Lake City, Utah (Paul L. Anderson Collection)

were represented. Some pavilions were embellished with exuberant modern ornament: flowers, birds, sunbursts, and bold geometric patterns. This decorated style became widely popular following the exposition which gave it a name — Art Deco. The fair also included pavilions of a more radical modernism. One example was the Pavilion de l'Esprit Nouveau, a starkly modern demonstration house of plain white surfaces and large unornamented windows by a young Swiss-born architect who called himself Le Corbusier. Other pavilions illustrated a more conservative modernism in simplified, austere versions of classical architecture. These three architectural tendencies, sometimes loosely grouped together under the term “moderne,” all flourished in America over the next fifteen years. The new styles were particularly popular in New York City, where an unprecedented building boom provided opportunities to use them in new office towers. Some progressive industries associated with modern technology such as movie theaters, automobile dealerships, and telephone offices also found these styles compatible with their images.³ The telephone company building on State Street in Salt Lake City and the nearby Centre Theatre are two such examples. Two more of Utah's best Art Deco buildings are in Ogden — the City and County Building with its stepped-back silhouette similar to many New York skyscrapers, and the richly decorated Ogden High School.

One of the earliest evidences of the influence of these styles in LDS architecture was Pope and Burton's 1928 additions and alterations to the Salt Lake Wasatch Ward, a Wrightian structure they had designed a decade earlier. Their new scheme changed the meetinghouse into an exotic pavilion with dense floral ornament over the entrances reminiscent of the Paris Exposition. Mild Art Deco influence also appeared in two monuments designed in the early 1930s. The Three Witnesses Monument on Temple Square used the stepped

³A good source on commercial architecture of this period is Cervin Robinson and Rosemarie Haag Bletter, *Skyscraper Style: Art Deco, New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).



Glendale Ward, Glendale, California (Paul L. Anderson Collection)

silhouette of New York skyscrapers and a band of modern ornament. The pedestal for the Angel Moroni statue on the Hill Cumorah designed in 1932 included a typical sunburst pattern on a shaft that tapered like a Bertram Goodhue facade.

Another important influence on American architecture came from an exhibition of photographs and models of modern buildings at New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1932 and an accompanying book, *The International Style*, by Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson.⁴ The authors disapproved of Art Deco and championed the smooth plaster, metal, and glass used by such rising European architects as Le Corbusier, Gropius, and Mies van der Rohe. The book included pictures of factories, stores, houses, and schools, but no religious buildings at all. Its highly polemical tone made it a principal manifesto in the battle between traditional and modern architects that raged in the profession over the next decade.

The Great Depression of the early 1930s created a building slump that provided some reading time for unemployed architects. One such architect was Georgius Young Cannon, a Salt Lake City man who had studied at MIT and established a practice in Pasadena, California. He read *The International Style* in a library where he spent much time between commissions and was favorably impressed.⁵ Soon thereafter he got the chance to try his hand at the new style when he was selected as architect for the LDS meetinghouse in nearby Glendale. His design, published in the *Deseret News Church Department*, now the *Church News*, in January 1935, centered on an elliptical chapel with a flat roof

⁴Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style: Architecture since 1922* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1932).

⁵Georgius Y. Cannon Oral History, interview by Paul L. Anderson, 1973, typescript, p. 7, The James Moyle Oral History Program, Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

and plain white walls.⁶ The cultural hall and classroom wings flanked the chapel and surrounded an open courtyard. An entire wall of glass in each classroom looked into the court. The classrooms were connected to each other and to the chapel by a covered outdoor walkway, an early use of a circulation system that later became common in California schools. The building was a fine example of International Style ideals and a startling departure from conventional LDS architecture.

Shortly after its completion, Cannon entered the Glendale meetinghouse in a national competition sponsored by the Pittsburgh Plate Glass company and *Architectural Forum* magazine to recognize innovative use of glass. The prestigious competition was announced in early 1937 and awards were made in the August issue of the magazine. The Glendale meetinghouse won first prize in the institutional category. Several pages of photographs appeared with a glowing caption: "One of the first American examples of the application of the modern style to church building, this example is a worthy successor to the best of its European progenitors."⁷ Pictures of the meetinghouse and other award-winning buildings also appeared in several other architectural and engineering publications. No other Mormon building has ever received such positive and widespread recognition from the architectural profession.

Notwithstanding this award, however, the Glendale meetinghouse was not universally appreciated. According to Cannon, some Church leaders found it too modern for their tastes. The award certificate was never hung in the building nor was the honor reported in the Mormon press.⁸ Despite this mixed reception, Cannon did another modern chapel for the Arlington Ward in Los Angeles a few years later. Meanwhile, other architects tried their hands at variations of the new styles, producing an impressive collection of modern LDS church buildings over the next five years. Not all Mormon buildings of these years were modern — probably more were built in traditional styles — but this willingness of LDS architects and Church leaders to experiment with new ideas was a remarkable fact. New LDS buildings included examples of all three modernistic tendencies mentioned above: the sleek lines of the International Style and streamlined moderne; the dramatic silhouette and geometric decoration of Art Deco; and the elegance of simplified classicism.

The Glendale Ward was the purest Mormon example of International Style, but many other buildings incorporated similar design ideas in more cautious ways. The seminary building for Ogden High School was a modest essay in the style, with a flat roof, and white, streamlined walls. The main feature of the Grandview Ward in Salt Lake City, completed in 1937, was the curved front of the chapel which projected toward the street. Other meetinghouses with a strong family resemblance were built in Houston, Texas; Bountiful, Utah; and Shelley, Idaho. Two outstanding buildings along similar lines were the Boise First Ward, with its handsome symmetrical façade, and the

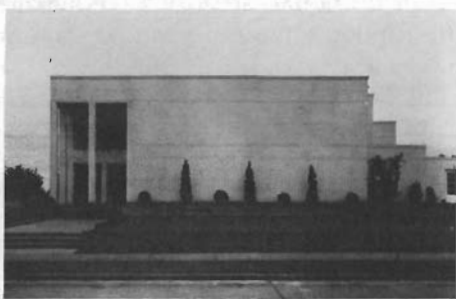
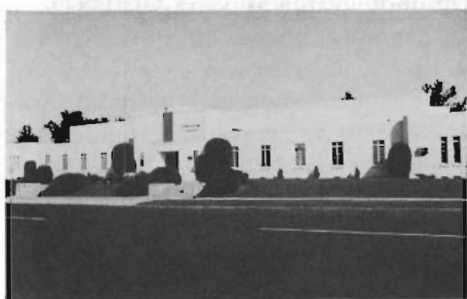
⁶"Breaking Ground for Glendale Chapel," *The Deseret News Church Department* (January 26, 1935), p. 3.

⁷"Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, Glendale, Calif." *Architectural Forum* 67 (August 1937): 123–124.

⁸Cannon Oral History, p. 9.



Grandview Ward, Salt Lake City, Utah (LDS Archives Collection)
Oneida Stake Tabernacle, Preston, Idaho (Paul L. Anderson Collection)



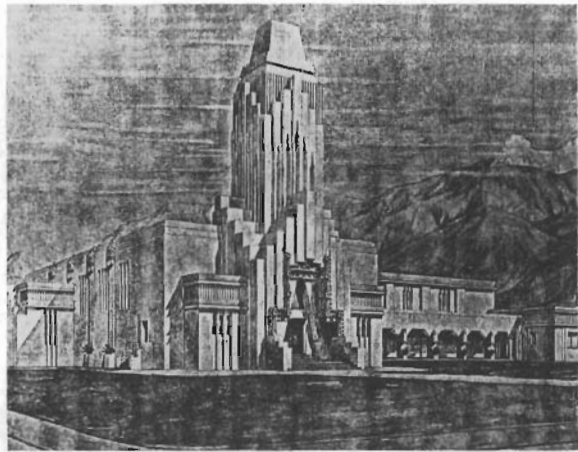
Boise First Ward, Boise, Idaho (Paul L. Anderson Collection)
West Seattle Ward, Seattle, Washington (LDS Archives Collection)

sturdy-looking Oneida Stake Tabernacle in Preston, Idaho. Other examples could be found throughout Utah, Idaho, and California.

One of the most arrestingly simple designs was the West Seattle Ward. Its street façade was a stark composition of rectangles broken only by the entrance and softened by the texture of the brick. Although skillfully composed, this building illustrated the difficulty of creating a sense of religious aspiration with so severe an architectural vocabulary. To some observers, a style that grew partly out of the glorification of the machine presented problems for buildings that glorified other aspects of the human spirit. At best the buildings were sleek and gleaming; at worst, bleak and dull.

The more elaborate modernism of Art Deco also found some talented disciples among Mormon architects. A mild version of this style was considered appropriate for an academic structure, the Brimhall Building of 1937 at BYU, and for a frankly economic enterprise, Welfare Square. Both buildings resembled small contemporary offices. A far more extravagant design for a Mormon building was inspired by ancient Mayan ruins, a favorite source of Art Deco ornament. A scheme for a meetinghouse in Mexico City was prepared by Robert D. Stacey-Judd of Hollywood, California in 1934, but never built.

For the Ogden Twenty-first Ward, architect Leslie Hodgson used the same blocky forms, castellated parapet, and simple interior woodwork as in his earlier Ogden High School. Over the entrance he placed as exuberant an inscription panel as one is likely to find on a Mormon building, with the name of the ward framed by two abstracted American flags and a border of zigzags and



Ogden Twenty-first Ward, Ogden, Utah (Paul L. Anderson Collection)

Architect's rendering of Mexico City Branch, Mexico City (LDS Archives Collection)



Minidoka Stake Tabernacle, Rupert, Idaho (Paul L. Anderson Collection)

curves. Similar geometric ornament also appeared on the cornice of the all-concrete Ogden Twenty-second Ward.

One problem in adapting this commercial style to religious use was how to incorporate a tower into the composition. In Smithfield, one architect solved the problem by keeping his tower low enough to blend with the horizontality of the building, topping it with a metal spire that tapered like the top of the Empire State Building. The tower of the Salt Lake Yalecrest Ward, with its top of colored ceramic tile, recalled the pyramidal tile-covered top of Bertram Goodhue's Los Angeles Public library.

Perhaps the finest integration of Art Deco ideas in an LDS meetinghouse was the Minidoka Stake Tabernacle in Rupert, Idaho, by Lorenzo S. Young. The tower here became an entrance foyer, and the horizontal lines of the building were emphasized by incised shadow lines that tied the windows and entrance columns together. Inside, the organ screen and pews were carved in abstract Art Deco patterns.

The third and most conservative strand of modernism in the 1930s attempted a compromise between modern simplicity and traditional forms that appealed to a wider public. Some of the best examples of this tendency are in the work of Pope and Burton. The Edgehill Ward of 1936 and the Layton Ward of 1937 are both basically colonial in form, but much simplified. Both buildings carry a few modern touches in the form of round windows and mildly Art Deco spires. Like several pavilions at the 1925 Paris Exposition, some of Pope and Burton's work seems to strive for a kind of romantic classicism. The tall proportions and delicate finials on the Tremonton Second Ward show some of this feeling, but it is most obvious in the spectacular design for the Oahu Stake Tabernacle in Honolulu prepared by Harold Burton in 1937. Here traditional elements of church architecture, a forecourt with fountain, a dramatic entrance portico, and a handsome tower were simplified in detail and composed with great sensitivity. Beautiful pierced grillworks in modern patterns and a large mosaic over the front entrance added to the interest of the façade. The plan of the building was cleverly contrived to fit around three large banyan trees, making two of them the centerpieces of two courtyards. In a beautiful adaptation for the climate, the baptismal font was also placed outside in a courtyard, flanked by lily ponds. The architect considered himself a modernist and said of the tabernacle, "The design follows none of the generally known architectural periods or styles, therefore it is unhampered with sentimentality of forms and traditions of the past."⁹ The irony of the statement, intended of course as propaganda in the battle between traditionalists and moderns, is that the building derives its power from its skillful exploitation of the traditional imagery of religious architecture. A smaller version of the same idea is the Park View Ward in Long Beach, California, of 1940, which has even more details of the traditional classical vocabulary.

While many of these modern meetinghouses were under construction in 1939, a convention of Church architects was held in Salt Lake City under Church auspices. An address given there by Lowell Parrish, a leading LDS modernist, was published in the *Church Department* of the *Deseret News*. His talk was a defense of the modern styles for church building, and his arguments seem to have been aimed more at Church leaders and members than at his architect audience. The talk makes interesting reading today when many architects and scholars are disillusioned with much of the rhetoric of the modern movement. Parrish began by admitting that modern architecture had not been universally popular in America, but he cited statistics that it was coming into acceptance. He claimed economy and practicality as advantages of the new style, quoting such famous modern proponents as Walter Gropius, Talbot Hamblin, Henry Russell Hitchcock, and Philip Johnson. Like these modern propagandists, Parrish asserted that the "new architecture" was the only acceptable kind. He went so far as to connect the intentions of modern architecture with the ideals of the Church:

The essence of our latter day Church teachings is the development and the progress of

⁹"Dreams Realized Through Sacrifices," *The Deseret News Church Department* (December 6, 1941), p. 1.



Architect's rendering of Oahu Stake Tabernacle, Honolulu, Hawaii (Douglas Burton Collection)

our Church, and each member in it. If we are to progress in our Church Building Program we should employ the principles of this progressive new architecture which are the results of all the technical, economic, intellectual, and social advances of our times. To work in an historical style, to copy or adapt an archaeological art form is inconsistent with our present way of living and believing.¹⁰

The conference reportedly passed a resolution encouraging the use of modern styles for LDS buildings, although a minority report defended the appropriateness of American Colonial.¹¹

If LDS chapels could be built in modern style, what about temples which require greater monumentality and a sense of dramatic aspiration? A cover for the *Improvement Era* in 1937 showed one artist's idea of the temple of the future — the Alberta Temple stretched into a skyscraper with a striking resemblance to the Panhellenic Hotel built in New York City between 1927 and 1930.¹²

The actual task of designing two new temples fell upon six Mormon architects in 1937. President Heber J. Grant and other Church leaders had decided that temples should be built in Idaho Falls and Los Angeles. The

¹⁰Lowell B. Parrish, "Modern Architecture in Relation to Church Building" *The Deseret News Church Department* (November 11, 1939) p. 7.

¹¹In an April 1982 conversation, Richard Jackson, a Salt Lake City architect who attended this meeting, told me that his uncle Taylor Woolley wrote a minority report defending the continued use of American Colonial style for LDS buildings. Interestingly, Woolley had been a modernist in his youth, working for several years in the office of Frank Lloyd Wright.

¹²Fielding K. Smith, artist, *The Improvement Era* (November 1937), front cover. Compare with John Mead Howell's Panhellenic Hotel in *Skyscraper Style*, p. 8.



Cover of *The Improvement Era*, November, 1937 (LDS Archives Collection)

The Board of Temple Architects: John Fetzer, Lorenzo S. Young, Edward O. Anderson, Ramm Hansen, and Georgius Y. Cannon (LDS Archives Collection)

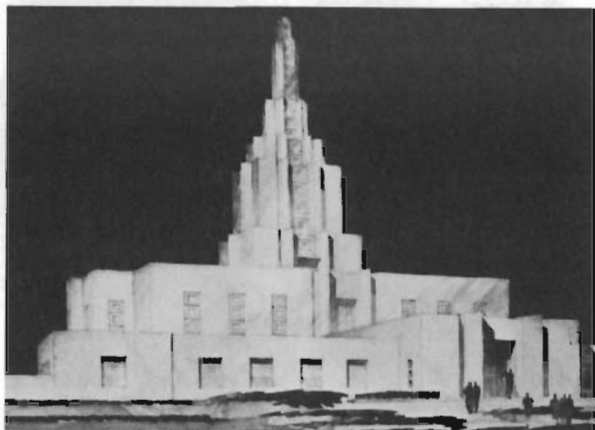
president favored an open competition for their designs, but Arthur Price of the Church Architectural Department convinced him instead to appoint a committee of prominent architects to design the buildings together.¹³ The group included Hyrum Pope, who passed away during the project, John Fetzer, Ramm Hansen, Edward O. Anderson, and Lorenzo S. Young of Salt Lake City, and Georgius Y. Cannon of Pasadena, California. The six architects were to work together and pool their ideas in evolving a design, with Church leaders giving periodic reviews to insure that they went in an acceptable direction.

Most members of the Board of Temple Architects had already produced some modern buildings and all subscribed to the modernist idea that form follows function. They began their work by analyzing the function of temples and prepared a variety of floor plans based on these analyses. They explored some rather original concepts: the design of a temple all on one level, the inclusion of separate facilities for endowments for the living and dead, and the use of a single room rather than the traditional four for the endowment for the dead.¹⁴ From the start, they found it difficult to be creative in a group. Architect Edward O. Anderson later recalled, "When you have six architects trying to design a building you have trouble. . . . We jangled and we never could agree on anything. So we decided that we would have to each make a sketch and then invite the First Presidency over and let them pick it out."¹⁵ Georgius Cannon had similar memories: "We kind of broke up into factions. I think working in a

¹³A. B. Paulson, Architect, to Bishop Sylvester Q. Cannon, April 1, 1937, Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. This letter reports President Grant's favorable attitude toward an open competition. Arthur Price, memo to file, March 29, 1937, Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. This memo outlines the advantages of appointing several architects to work together on the new temple designs.

¹⁴Many floor plans developed by the Board of Temple Architects in 1937 are preserved in the LDS Archives.

¹⁵Edward O. Anderson Oral History, interview by Paul L. Anderson, 1973, typescript, pp. 14–15, The James Moyle Oral History Program, Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.



Architect's rendering of Idaho Falls Temple, Idaho Falls, Idaho (Henry Fetzer Collection)
60 Wall Tower (1930–1932), New York City, New York (Paul L. Anderson Collection)

group is very, very difficult. It is for me. I thought it would be very easy and I discovered I was the most stubborn one of them all about my ideas.”¹⁶

The General Authorities finally selected a floor plan by John Fetzer that mixed elements of the Alberta and Mesa Temples: a two-story scheme with a celestial room in the center surrounded by ordinance rooms like Alberta, but including a grand stair reminiscent of Mesa. Fetzer gave the approved plan to his son Henry, a talented designer trained under Paul Cret at the University of Pennsylvania, who refined it and worked up the exterior design.¹⁷ Although he had no particular building in mind as a model and sought only to express the building's function in a modern way, its similarity to some New York City skyscrapers is striking. The verticality of the tower was emphasized by protruding ribs on each side. The entrance was flanked by similar ribs and adorned with modern lettering — an important element in the International Style since inscriptions were often the only ornament on modern buildings. The building was constructed in reinforced concrete poured between an outer facing of cast stone and an inner set of wooden forms, a sturdy technique, but one that did not provide air spaces for good insulation.

Inside were some handsome adaptations of modern decorative ideas. The marvelous baptismal font by Torlief Knaphus was cast in white bronze, the oxen and pedestal simplified and geometricized at the architects' request like the cubist sculpture that adorned modern buildings and the hoods of automobiles. Bold and colorful murals for each ordinance room were selected from proposals by several invited artists. Harris Weberg did a cosmic scene for the creation room, and Robert Shepherd did the superb garden room murals in a style that mixed something of post-Impressionists like Henri Rousseau with the colors and linear qualities of the best Walt Disney animation. The world room by Joseph A. F. Everett honored another modern tradition by depicting pioneers plowing the fields of the Snake River Valley in a composition reminiscent of realist murals sponsored by the WPA. The celestial room included

¹⁶Cannon Oral History, p. 10.

¹⁷Personal conversation with Henry Fetzer, May 2, 1982.

murals by Lee Greene Richards suggesting the celestial kingdom and doorways and niches of polished stone, much like some salons of the 1925 Paris Exhibition. The sealing rooms included modernistic built-in furniture. The decorative scheme of the temple was original and vigorous, but there were problems.

Some problems were practical. Poor insulation in the exterior walls caused a condensation problem. As water collected on the inside of the walls, the fabric that had been glued to them to receive the paintings began to fall off, soiling the carpet as well. The concrete joints also made unsightly cracks inside. Additional problems were aesthetic. Edward Anderson recalled:

We drew the plans for the Idaho Falls Temple. Then the war came along and they did not dedicate it. It stood there idle for several years and they would not approve it. The Brethren did not approve it. They said they didn't like it. It was too cold. It was very modern. They didn't like it. So they hired an architect from Los Angeles to finish it. Then they said they weren't satisfied with that so they hired an interior decorator, a lady, and they weren't satisfied with that. In the meantime I was selected as the supervising architect. . . . Bishop [LeGrand] Richards came to me and said they wanted to have a meeting with the First Presidency. President [J. Reuben] Clark was a very stern man. . . . He said, "We're not satisfied with the Idaho Falls Temple. We hired six architects and we did not get the results we wanted, and then we hired another architect and we did not get the results, and then we hired an interior decorator and we did not get the results. We do not like it. What do you have to say?" I said, "I don't like it either."¹⁸

In 1943 the Board of Temple Architects was released and Anderson became the sole Church Architect. He corrected the practical problems and softened the interiors of the temple sufficiently for the building to be dedicated in 1945.

Before their release, the Board of Temple Architects had also prepared several designs for the somewhat larger Los Angeles Temple, including a rather stunning one-story scheme by Georgius Y. Cannon and one with a central tower by Lorenzo S. Young and Ramm Hansen. Cannon remembered that these designs did not get a very sympathetic viewing either:

When we had our sketches for the Los Angeles Temple, which I remember particularly, the First Presidency came over to look at them. President Grant and President Clark and President McKay walked in and almost immediately President Clark stepped in front of President Grant and said, "I don't like this, I don't like this, and I don't like this, I like this, I don't like this," and out they walked. That was all the consideration given to our sketches. After they had finally decided what they wanted of course the sketches were hung and the janitor looked at them and said, "Well, they selected the wrong one." He liked my sketch.¹⁹

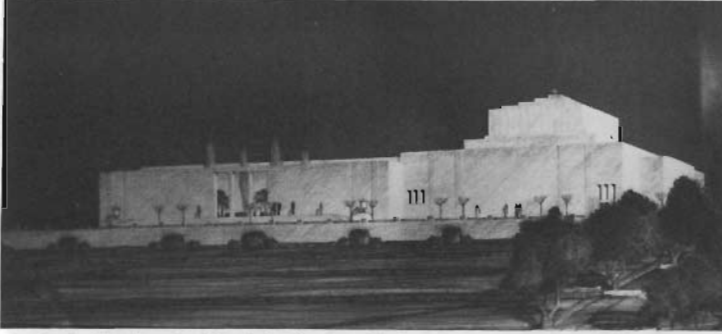
The design by Lorenzo S. Young and Ramm Hansen was favored enough to be published.²⁰ However, all of these schemes were eventually abandoned, and a much larger plan was developed by Edward O. Anderson, borrowing rather freely from the Young-Hansen design.

In the years following World War II, a reaction against modern architecture for LDS meetinghouses also set in. Colonial became the prevailing style once again, with its more comfortable associations. More than two hun-

¹⁸Anderson Oral History, p. 15.

¹⁹Cannon Oral History, pp. 15–16.

²⁰Nels Benjamin Lundwall, *Temples of the Most High* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1941), p. 191.



Design for Los Angeles Temple by Georgius Y. Cannon (LDS Archives Collection)

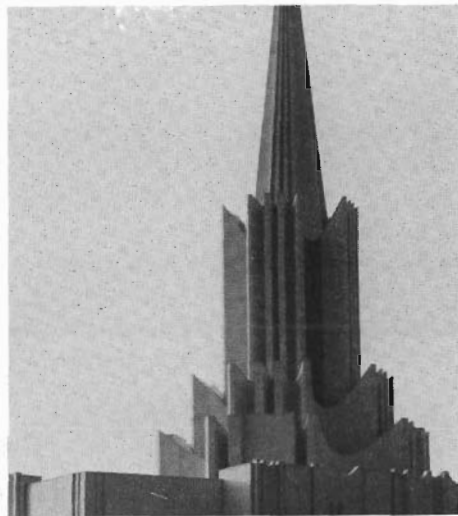
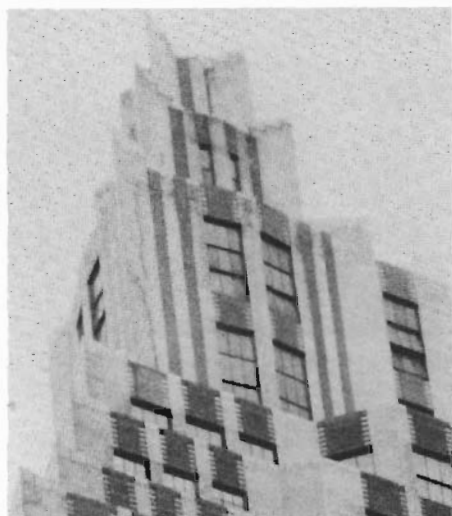


Design for Los Angeles Temple by Lorenzo S. Young and Ramm Hansen (LDS Archives Collection)

dred colonials were built from custom designs and standard plans ranging from serious explorations of the style to simple brick boxes ornamented only around the entrances and spires. The mainstream respectability of these meetinghouses was so complete that many of them could be distinguished from typical Protestant churches of the time only by the absence of crosses. It may be somewhat ironic that this return to traditional styles by the Church coincided with the ascendancy of modern architecture over the old styles throughout most of America. It is relevant to observe, however, that post-War religious architecture took a more expressionistic turn, emphasizing towers and bold geometric forms that contrasted with the cool modernism of the previous decades.

The pre-War modern styles were not totally forgotten in the Church, however. The Relief Society Building was an excellent example of the stripped-down classicism of the earlier period. It appears to be a rather direct borrowing from Paul Cret's Folger Library in Washington, D.C., considered one of the finest buildings in America by many of that generation.

After a ten-year vogue, the colonial plans were phased out under the



Bricken-Casino Building (1930–1931), New York City, New York (Paul L. Anderson Collection)
Jordan River Temple, South Jordan, Utah (Paul L. Anderson Collection)

leadership of Harold Burton, the new Church Architect. However, the new standard plans were modern in a different way from the pre-War modern meetinghouses. The sprawling wings and gabled roofs were closer to the shapes of the suburban ranch-style houses among which so many chapels were built. A few buildings, however, like Douglas Burton's chapel on the Chicago North Shore, contained elements of the earlier modernism, and the North Visitors Center on Temple Square by George Cannon Young was only a slightly updated version of the streamlined classicism of his Relief Society Building. The example of the Idaho Falls Temple also remained powerful. Gleaming white walls became a standard feature of later temples. The central tower idea reappeared in Burton's design for the Oakland Temple, a building that also included sculpture reminiscent of Goodhue's Nebraska Capitol of four decades earlier. And it is not hard to see a similar survival of Art Deco ideas in the most recent Church monument, the Jordan River Temple, which bears some resemblance to a 1930 New York City skyscraper.²¹ The new temple aspires heavenward with an old-fashioned flamboyance that reminds us of a time when building churches in modern style was a daringly progressive, even radical, thing to do.

²¹The similarities in feeling of the Idaho Falls Temple and Jordan River Temple are partly due to the fact that Henry Fetzer was a principal designer of the exterior of both structures, the former for his father John Fetzer, and the latter for his brother, Church Architect Emil B. Fetzer.

“A Place Prepared”: Joseph, Brigham and the Quest for Promised Refuge in the West

By Ronald K. Esplin

Probably at no time was Brigham Young more openly and publicly emotional than on September 24, 1848. His return to the Salt Lake Valley with his family marked for him the end of a religious quest that had begun many years before. Finally he was home and he felt it deeply. “I trust I can have command over my feelings to speak with a childlike spirit yet with the confidence and courage of a man,” he addressed his people, “although it may be hard to suppress my feelings.”

I venture to say that not another person in the congregation has the sensations that I have right now. . . . having to guard every moment to keep from bursting into tears and sitting down like a child. We are here! Thank the Almighty God of Israel!

Some had marveled when the Saints agreed to leave the States, he continued, but it was no sacrifice.

From the days of Oliver Cowdery and Parley Pratt on the borders of the Lamanites [1831] Joseph Smith had longed to be here. . . . They would not let us come and at last we have accomplished it. We are in the midst of the Lamanites! We are here thank the Almighty God. Glory to the Lord . . . for here is the place of beginning.¹

Ronald K. Esplin is a Senior Research Historian in the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History and Associate Professor of Church History at Brigham Young University. A version of this paper was presented at the Mormon History Association Annual Meeting, 1982, Weber State College.

¹Thomas Bullock Minutes, September 24, 1848, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, hereafter cited as Church Archives.

"This is the place he had seen before he came here," Young concluded, "& it is the place for the Saints to geather."²

For Brigham Young and his associates, removal from Nauvoo to the mountain valleys of the West was not a chance result from fleeing enemies but something long contemplated. "Hurra, hurra, hurra, theres my home at last," exulted Thomas Bullock when he first viewed the Salt Lake Valley in 1847, two days before Brigham Young arrived. That same July day several of the apostles wrote to President Young, still ill and some miles behind, that they were at last "within the long sought valley."³ The pilgrimage was over, marking the commencement of a long-awaited era of new beginnings. Compiling later a history of this journey "from Nauvoo to these valleys," Wilford Woodruff insisted the move would "stand in bold relief as the main Key of the Mormon History of the nineteenth century." Furthermore, added another, "Joseph had spoken of it and Brigham carried it out."⁴

Was the western exodus a key to understanding nineteenth-century Mormonism? Did the Prophet Joseph plan the exodus which Brigham carried out? Had Brigham Young been directed by a "pre-vision" of the Valley? If so, how do we understand his continual effort to gather solid practical information about the Great Basin? Finally, why did this movement have such profound personal meaning to Brigham Young? To answer — and to understand the exodus — we must begin in the 1830s, when, according to Young, Joseph Smith first longed for the mountain valleys of the West.

In the early days of Kirtland and Missouri the Church was small, first a few hundred, then a few thousand members. Immediate numbers and resources did not, however, restrain visions of the future. Very early there was enthusiastic talk suggesting an expansive destiny for the Saints that in some manner involved North America's great West. Speaking of those days a few years later, Sidney Ridgon boasted that although the elders could then all fit in a log cabin, their plans were as large as the world:

many things were taught, preached, & believed then[.] We knew the whole world would laugh at us — so we concealed ourselves — we had things to say to one another that nobody else knew of — all nations to flock to it — whole nations born in one day — we talked such big things. . . . we were maturing plans 14 years ago which we can now tell.⁵

Wilford Woodruff later remembered one Kirtland occasion made memorable by such talk. With other elders preparing for Zion's Camp, he had just arrived in Kirtland. On Sunday they met to share heartfelt expressions of faith, to which the Prophet responded:

Brethren I have been very much edified and instructed in your testimonies . . . , but I want to say . . . that you know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and

²Hosea Stout Diary, September 24, 1848, published in Juanita Brooks, ed., *On the Mormon Frontier — The Diary of Hosea Stout 1844–1861*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press and Utah State Historical Society, 1964), 1:327, (hereafter referred to as Hosea Stout Diary).

³Thomas Bullock Diary, July 22, 1847, Church Archives; Orson Pratt, Willard Richards, George A. Smith to Brigham Young, July 22, 1847, Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives.

⁴Wilford Woodruff to Thomas L. Kane, March 8, 1859, Thomas L. Kane Collection, Church Archives; Provo School of the Prophets, June 8, 1868, Church Archives.

⁵Conference Minutes, April 7, 1844, Church Archives.

kingdom than a babe upon its mother's lap. . . . it is only a handful of Priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will fill North and South America — it will fill the world. . . . It will fill the Rocky Mountains.⁶

Because these and similar reminiscences of Kirtland⁷ seem more at home in Nauvoo, where there clearly was not just talk but action relating to the Rocky Mountains and the West, one is tempted to discount them — to recognize at least the tendency for memories to become more specific as the events unfolded. But whether the prophecies were specifically about the Rocky Mountains, as some remembered, or more generally about the West, contemporary records confirm that Kirtland discourse included expansionist expressions about a future destiny beyond the Mississippi. As early as January 1831, for example, the *Painesville Telegraph* reported the Mormon assertion that God had revealed that their promised land extended from Kirtland to the Pacific Ocean.⁸ The next year the Mormon newspaper, *The Evening and The Morning Star*, only slightly less expansively described the “far west . . . the section of country from the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains,” as the region blessed by the Lord as the land of Zion.⁹ Clearly the Mormons contemplated an expansive western territory a decade before Joseph Smith proclaimed publicly in Nauvoo that Zion would fill North and South America.

Early Mormon expectations for the West were clearly related to Book of Mormon prophecies about the redemption and future power of the Lamanites or American Indians. This connection is explicit in the 1832 *Evening and Morning Star* article. And in 1834 E. D. Howe characterized the belief that the Indians “in a very few years, will be converted to Mormonism” and take

⁶Discourse by Wilford Woodruff, April 8, 1898, *Sixty-eighth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* . . . (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Company, 1898), p. 57. For other reminiscent versions of this meeting that agree in all essentials, see Abraham H. Cannon Diary, April 19, 1894, and Heber J. Grant Diary, April 17, 1894, Church Archives. Woodruff's 1834 diary confirms the circumstantial details he remembered more than half a century later and dates the meeting April 27, 1834, but the diary does not record the substance of the Prophet's impressive remarks.

⁷For additional reminiscences affirming 1830s mention of a Rocky Mountain destiny, see Lewis Clark Christian, “A Study of Mormon Foreknowledge of the American Far West Prior to the Exodus (1830–February 1846)” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1972), pp. 65–67. See also Abraham H. Cannon Diary, October 6, 1891, Church Archives.

Christian's thesis is an important sourcebook surveying documentation relating to the Mormons and the West before the exodus. For his interpretation and a summary of his conclusions, see his article “Mormon Foreknowledge of the West,” *Brigham Young University Studies* 21 (Fall 1981): 403–15. Christian's companion work, “A Study of the Mormon Westward Migration between February 1846 and July 1847 with Emphasis on and Evaluation of the Factors that Led to the Mormons' Choice of Salt Lake Valley as the Site of their Initial Colony” (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1976), is a useful sourcebook for the later period.

⁸*Painesville (Ohio) Telegraph*, January 18, 1831, as quoted in Christian, “Mormon Foreknowledge of the American West,” p. 62. The Ohio Mormons reportedly learned this when John Whitmer arrived in Kirtland from New York with a letter from Sidney Rigdon, who had traveled there to meet Joseph Smith. According to E. D. Howe, who reproduced the letter, it said: “The Lord has made known unto us, some of his great things which he has laid up for them that love him, among which the fact (a glory of wonders it is) that you are living on the land of promise and there *there* is the place of gathering, and from that place to the Pacific Ocean, God has dedicated to himself . . . and he has given it to us. . . .” E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, Ohio, 1834), p. 111.

⁹*The Evening and The Morning Star*, October 1832.

possession of their ancient inheritance as a leading article of Mormon faith.¹⁰ Brigham Young believed that from the first time Joseph Smith stood on the banks of the Missouri River looking westward across Indian country, he desired to go further west among the Indians but “there was a watch placed upon him continually to see that he had no communication” with them.¹¹ Government regulations enforced by Indian agents forbade dwelling among the Indians and attempted to regulate all intercourse with them, and very early Missourians were suspicious of supposed Mormon meddling with the natives. Whatever Joseph Smith’s hopes and plans for the Indians and the West in the 1830s, he could not implement them from Missouri. Only when he had access to the Indians through Iowa in 1839–1840 could he, and did he, begin implementation.

In addition to accepting a special responsibility to redeem the Indians, Mormons believed it their duty to “build Zion” and “establish the kingdom of God” on earth—to gather sufficient like-minded believers to build temples and priesthood-directed communities. Working to create close-knit communities that differed in religion, mores, and customs from their neighbors, inevitably the Saints encountered ill feeling and, eventually, hostility from old settlers. After severe problems in Jackson County, Missouri, in 1833 and later problems in Kirtland, Ohio, it was by the late 1830s becoming clear that to mature as a unique people the Latter-day Saints needed a secure and, perhaps, isolated refuge. Living forever among gentile neighbors inimical to their institutions would not do.

Brigham Young came to that conclusion in the summer of 1838, a few months after arriving with Joseph Smith from divided Kirtland to live with the Saints in northern Missouri. Earlier settlements had ended in disaster and, thought Young, the same fate awaited the existing Missouri settlements. “I saw, upon natural principles, that we would be driven from there,” he remembered. “When, I did not know; but it was plain to me that we would have to leave.” He also perceived “upon natural principles” that, to prosper, the Saints needed time and space to “gain a foothold, a strength, power, influence, and ability to walk by themselves and take care of themselves.” Only the Far West seemed to promise such a refuge, although he knew that legal and governmental obstacles associated with the Missouri Indian frontier, as well as practical considerations, meant that when they left Missouri it would not be directly for the West.¹²

In retrospect, it appears that the expulsion of the Mormons from northern Missouri in the fall and winter of 1838–39 was an important step toward eventual settlement in the West. The intensity of the hostility convinced Mormon leaders that it would be many years before they could hope to occupy lands near their designated “center-stake” in Jackson County, Missouri—and

¹⁰Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, pp. 145, 146.

¹¹Brigham Young Discourse, August 31, 1856, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1854–1886; reprint ed., 1967), 4:41. See also Brigham Young Discourse, September 24, 1848, Thomas Bullock Minutes, Church Archives, and revelation given by Joseph Smith, July 17, 1831, as reported in W. W. Phelps to Brigham Young, August 12, 1861, Church Archives.

¹²Brigham Young Discourse, February 17, 1856, *Journal of Discourses* 3:209. See also Brigham Young Discourse, December 11, 1864, *Journal of Discourses* 11:17–19.

that in order to prosper they would have to find a secure home elsewhere. Existing evidence suggests that the Missouri expulsion turned Joseph Smith's thought again towards the Far West.¹³ Nonetheless, there was no immediate way west from Missouri. Resources destroyed, communities dispersed, the Saints in 1839 desperately needed not a distant and isolated retreat but any place, the nearer the better, to survive, regroup, prepare. But from 1839 on, Mormon leaders would not only think of the West, but they would actively prepare for a more permanent haven beyond the Missouri.

Nauvoo was never designated nor at first considered a "permanent" gathering place.¹⁴ Leaders as prominent as Sidney Rigdon, William Marks, and Bishop Edward Partridge publicly expressed doubts that there should even be another gathering after so much grief in Missouri. Brigham Young and other apostles largely quelled such pessimism and as soon as Joseph Smith was released from jail he contracted for Iowa and Illinois lands, confirming the decision to gather anew. Neither revelation nor a long-term plan dictated the location for the new city, however; it was simply a matter of available land on reasonable terms in the vicinity where many of the Saints had landed. Not until 1841, with the first thrust to the West already underway, did revelation confirm the location, authorize making of Nauvoo a substantial city, and command the construction of a temple.¹⁵

Nauvoo, then, was founded as an interim gathering place, a fact understood by at least some of its founding citizens.¹⁶ As early as May 1839 Heber Kimball prophesied that the area, though beautiful, was "not a long abiding place for the Saints." The statement is reported to have angered Sidney Rigdon, who resided in the region's best home and had no desire to leave.¹⁷ Other reminiscences — credible in the context of demonstrable interest in the West in early Nauvoo — suggest that within months of founding the city, the Prophet spoke with some individuals about a future move to the mountains of

¹³Lyman Wight later said that while in Liberty Jail the Prophet discussed sending an expedition to explore the West. See Lyman Wight to Wilford Woodruff, August 24, 1857, Church Archives. Orson Pratt similarly insisted that before the Missouri expulsion Joseph Smith had planned to send an exploring expedition to prepare the way for families moving West. See his remarks in John D. Lee Diary, April 26, 1846, Church Archives. It is also possible that in 1838–39 Joseph Smith received maps of some of the western mountain valleys from a man who had been in the Great Basin with Jim Bridger. See Church Historian's Office Journal, June 26, 1908, Church Archives, for comments of David Lewis regarding his earlier experiences with Bridger and Smith.

¹⁴As Nauvoo became the most impressive Mormon community to date, with more people, resources, power, and promise than any earlier settlement, it began to seem permanent. With investment and success, attachment to Nauvoo grew until, eventually, leaders held out hopes almost to the last that they could maintain Nauvoo indefinitely as a "temple city" even though the headquarters moved elsewhere and they retained their goal of one day returning to Missouri.

¹⁵See Doctrine & Covenants, Section 124, January 14, 1841.

¹⁶Of course, the future *permanent* headquarters was to be in Jackson County, so any settlement outside of Missouri technically could be considered interim. Nonetheless, it seems likely that prior experience with neighbors in Ohio and Missouri, combined with initial reluctance to establish a new city and some talk about a refuge in the West, all contributed to an initial expectation that Nauvoo would not be a long-term headquarters.

¹⁷Heber C. Kimball, *President Heber C. Kimball's Journal*. Seventh Book of the Faith-Promoting Series (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor's Office, 1882), pp. 77–78. Rather than a daily journal like Kimball kept in the 1840s, this is a personal history dictated beginning in Quincy, Illinois, in 1839, and revised in Utah. Manuscript versions are in the Church Archives.

the West. Increasing friction with neighbors and general excitement about the West during later Nauvoo years probably kept such ideas alive. And eventually, according to Brigham Young, hundreds who later traveled to Utah heard Joseph Smith say: "The Saints will leave Nauvoo, I do not say they will be driven . . . but they will leave here and go to the mountains."¹⁸ No doubt others felt as did Nancy Richards, who, upon learning in 1845 of plans to abandon the city, wrote that for nearly four years she had "felt confident such a time would come. But how soon or how brought about I knew not."¹⁹

Within a year of founding Nauvoo, Joseph Smith commissioned the first important preparatory work among the Indians near the Missouri River. That this involved more than proselyting was revealed only indirectly when Smith dispatched Jonathan Dunham, a participant, from his station near Fort Leavenworth to tribes residing in New York. Describing his mission as "urgent indeed," Dunham wrote ahead to ask the Kirtland Saints for assistance. "A new scene of things are about to transpire in the west, in fulfilment of prophecy," he wrote, adding: "I want your prayers & also the prayers of the brethren that I may accomplish my mission." He signed himself "J Dunham Lamanite."²⁰ Once in Kirtland, Dunham further explained what he understood from the Prophet: "This nation is about to be destroyed," he told Kirtland leaders, "but there is a place of safety preparing for [the Saints] away towards the Rocky Mountains."²¹ He went on to report that the way there would be difficult and "but few will be preserved to arrive."²²

Jonathan Dunham's later involvements add credibility to his claims. This was for him the first of several missions authorized by Joseph Smith — and later Brigham Young — to develop friendship and influence with the western tribes

¹⁸Brigham Young Discourse, March 3, 1861, *Journal of Discourses* 8:356. See also L. Marcham, in Provo School of the Prophets Minutes, June 8, 1868, Church Archives: "Joseph Said in 1839 or 40 that this people would have to [leave?] that Country. And build up the kingdom of God in the tops of the mountains." Oliver B. Huntington later recorded that in the early days of Nauvoo, Joseph Smith, Sr., privately told his family that "the Lord had told Joseph (his son) the Prophet, that we would stay there just 7 years and that when we left there, we would go right up into the midst of the Indians, in the Rocky Mountains." Oliver B. Huntington Journal, p. 204, Church Archives.

¹⁹Nancy Richards to Willard Richards, November 19, 1845, as quoted in Christian, "Mormon Foreknowledge of the American Far West," p. 68. Compare this with the statement of Sarah Leavitt, who later wrote (of 1846) that she had known "for ten years that we had got to go and I was glad we had got started," quoted in *ibid.*, p. 66.

²⁰This letter was described in a communication from Kirtland to Nauvoo asking for clarification. See Thomas Burdick letter, August 28, 1840, Joseph Smith Collection, Church Archives. That the Twelve, then in England, were aware of plans involving the Indians, and that they attached considerable importance to them, can be seen from Wilford Woodruff Diary, July 13, 1840, Wilford Woodruff Papers, Church Archives, and Brigham Young to Joseph Smith, May 7, 1840, Joseph Smith Collection, where he wrote: "I wish you would tell me how cousin Lemuel gets along with his business . . ."

²¹For the idea of a refuge in the West, and the West in general as a place of safety for the Saints, see Parley P. Pratt's *Mormonism Unveiled: Zion's Watchman Unmasked*, 4th ed. (New York, 1842), p. 6. (The first edition was printed in New York in 1838.) Compare this with Orson Pratt's memory that in Nauvoo Joseph had assembled some of the elders and told them they would have to "flee to the Rocky Mountains for safety," October 7, 1874, *Journal of Discourses* 18:224.

²²Thomas Burdick letter, August 28, 1840, Joseph Smith Collection. As noted, Burdick preserved this information in a letter to Nauvoo asking for clarification. In addition to these statements relating directly to his own mission, Dunham talked about other prophecies, causing Burdick to write: "such teachings are not all understood in this place, they are calculated to make

and, from his post on the Missouri, learn more about the West.²³ The most explicit statement preserved about the nature of these missions came in connection with an 1845 call "to fill Joseph's original measures" by "proceeding from tribe to tribe, to unite the Lamanites and find a home for the Saints."²⁴ Contact with the western Indians was a vital part of the Mormon thrust to the West, a thrust that began in 1840. From Nauvoo Joseph directed efforts to establish close relationships with the Indians, uniting them as allies and friends, and attempting at the same time to learn more about their country in preparation for eventually settling among them.

The next important contemporary documentation of the Prophet's plans is in two 1842 letters written by disaffected Mormon Oliver Olney. Olney's somewhat disjointed letters preserve remarkable glimpses of what the Prophet and his associates intended in reference to the Rocky Mountains. In the first letter, dated July 20, Olney said of Mormon intentions to go to the Rocky Mountains: "I know of their plans." First a few "will start and go out by degrees untill all will follow who has their faith." As they arrive at their destination they will "form a union . . . until they become a powerful people." They will also unite with the Indians, "as this has long been the theme" of the leaders. When might this occur? "If they put their plans into practice" they would "soon be . . . on their way," thought Olney. A few weeks later Olney wrote again his opinion that the Mormon move "to the rocky mountains as the saying is" was imminent.²⁵

Both reminiscent accounts and documentation in Nauvoo after the Prophet's death lend credence to this as a fair summary of what Joseph Smith intended.²⁶ It is even likely that at this early date he had some hope of beginning the process of removal "soon." In the spring of 1842 he launched a series of interrelated measures, including the organization of the Relief Society

excitement & what the consequences may be I am not able to say." Burdick reasonably concluded that "looking at all his proceedings and teachings, I for one cannot help but doubt more and more his being authorized & sent to teach all these things in this place at this time." Dunham probably was not authorized to talk as he did. Apparently lacking a formal letter of authority from Smith, he may have tried to impress Kirtland leaders by telling more than was prudent. Joseph Smith was not in Nauvoo when Burdick's inquiry arrived, and Hyrum Smith, it appears, declined to handle the matter in Joseph's absence. No written response from Nauvoo on the subject has been located.

²³It is clear that only part of Dunham's activities — and the activities of others like him — can presently be documented. A detailed report of his 1843 mission is in Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1951), 5:541–49. In February 1844 he volunteered to be one of the explorers (for Oregon and California) who were to "select a site for a new city for the Saints." *Ibid.*, 6:223. He was a member of the Nauvoo Police, an officer of the Nauvoo Legion, and a frequent associate of Joseph Smith.

²⁴William Clayton Diary, March 1, 1845, as reproduced in Andrew F. Ehat, " 'It Seems Like Heaven Began on Earth': Joseph Smith and the Constitution of the Kingdom of God," *BYU Studies* 20 (Spring 1980): 253–80 (hereafter referred to as William Clayton Diary). See also April 11, 1845, p. 271, where it is simply called "the Western Mission." For additional information, see Smith, *History of the Church* 7:401, 428, 434. Had Dunham not died on this later mission, his several years' labors might have borne more direct fruit and become better known during the exodus. See *Ibid.*, 7:437.

²⁵Oliver Olney letters, July 20, October 4 and 6, 1842, Beinecke Library, Yale University, microfilm copy in Church Archives. See also Christian, "Mormon Foreknowledge of the American Far West," pp. 75–76.

²⁶The Indian connection has already been discussed. For Smith's settled intention to send out a vanguard, see Orson Pratt remarks in John D. Lee Diary, April 26, 1846.

and the presentation of temple ordinances, which, had he been able to fully follow up at that time, could have prepared the way for full implementation of his western plans.²⁷

The supposed dating of Joseph Smith's famous and controversial "Rocky Mountain Prophecy" of 1842 places it at about the same time as Olney's first letter mentioning the Rocky Mountain plans.²⁸ Since no contemporary account of the prophecy has been found, its accuracy and validity have been challenged. It fits well, however, both with the Olney letters and with the prophecy reported by Dunham in 1840, suggesting that there may be no reason to question the substance of the reminiscent account.²⁹

When Brigham Young later referred to Joseph Smith's "prophecy that this people would leave Nauvoo and be planted in the midst of the Rocky Mountains," he was probably referring not only to the "Rocky Mountain prophecy" of 1842, but to a settled belief repeated several times that apparently dated from at least 1840. "This prophecy," Young explained in Utah, "is not a new thing, it has not been hid in the dark, nor locked up in a drawer, but was declared to the people long before we left Nauvoo."³⁰ Hundreds of Utah Saints within sound of his voice had heard the Prophet proclaim it, he added.³¹ Perhaps the idea of a future move to the Far West became privately a "commonplace," something to joke about between friends, as suggested by Phineas Young's closing to a December 1842 letter:

Give my love to Brother Joseph when you see him[,] tell him I would come to the Rocky mountains to see him, and fight my way through an army of wild Cats or Missouri mobers and live on Skunks the whole journey if necessary.³²

While it is possible that Joseph Smith had hoped to advance preparations

²⁷Joseph Smith's Nauvoo timetable is complex and cannot be treated here. Some information is available in Ronald K. Esplin, "Joseph, Brigham and the Twelve: A Succession of Continuity," *BYU Studies* 21(Summer 1981): 302-7, 312-15.

²⁸On the strength of its supposed connection with installation of the Rising Sun Masonic Lodge in Iowa, Smith's *History of the Church* dates the prophecy August 6, 1842, after Olney's first letter. Anson Call, apparently the source for the published account, variously dates it in his own writings as July 14, [1843?] and simply "summer of 1842." Another reminiscent account places the date as August 8, 1842. See Christian, "Mormon Foreknowledge of the American Far West," pp. 72-77. See also Anson Call Diary and affidavits, Church Archives.

²⁹Later memories of Joseph Smith's 1842 remarks should not, of course, be treated as the primary documentation of his Nauvoo views of the Saints in the Rockies. For a recent discussion of the 1842 prophecy, see Davis Bitton, "Joseph Smith in the Mormon Folk Memory," *Restoration Studies I. Sesquicentennial Edition*, Maurice L. Draper, ed. (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1980), 75-94. Though suggesting caution in interpreting the prophecy, Bitton nonetheless concludes that it "probably had a basis in an actual statement."

There are reminiscent accounts, sometimes associated with this prophecy, reporting that Joseph Smith knew the route the Saints would follow to the mountains. See, for example, Hosea Stout Diary, 1:28, and those mentioned in Christian, "Mormon Foreknowledge of the American Far West," pp. 68-69, 93-94. Before Smith's death he had access to several maps, including Frémont's of the route that the pioneers later followed, and it seems likely that he discussed with associates the routes west. But if he prepared his own map, as some suggest, none has ever surfaced, nor is there any evidence that Brigham Young claimed such a map or was influenced in his travel decisions by one.

³⁰Brigham Young Discourse, March 16, 1856, *Journal of Discourses* 3:257-58.

³¹Brigham Young Discourse, March 3, 1861, *Journal of Discourses* 8:356. See also Orson Pratt Discourse, August 26, 1876, *Journal of Discourses* 18:224.

³²Phineas H. Young to Dear Brethren, December 14, 1842, Joseph Smith Collection.

towards the West in 1842, instead he found his attention and resources devoted to other priorities until the winter and spring of 1844. That season found Joseph in a mood of expansive optimism as he finished initial ordinance work in anticipation of the completion of the temple and contemplated running for president in the upcoming political campaign. It was also a season of increasing pressure on the Prophet and Nauvoo from adversaries, reinforcing anew the wisdom of establishing settlements elsewhere. With these concerns in mind, Joseph Smith met in council with the Quorum of the Twelve and others February 20, 1844 to discuss inquiries received from Lyman Wight about preaching to the Indians. After concluding to let Brother Wight use his own best judgment, Joseph Smith, according to his diary, “instructed the 12 to send out a delegation & investigate the locations of Callifornia & oregon & find a good location where we can move after the Temple is completed. & build a city in a day — and have a government of our own.”³³

The council met twice more to discuss what they variously referred to as the California or the Oregon Expedition. First they selected eight men to undertake the initial exploration, then the Prophet indicated that he wanted “an exposition of all that country” and they should have twenty-five men, stressing: “If we dont get volunteers wait till after the election.”³⁴ Contemporary accounts confirm that the purpose of the exploration was to “pitch upon a spot to build a city,” a place of refuge to which the Saints could remove after the dedication of the temple.³⁵

Without doubt, Joseph Smith revealed in these councils more details about his designs for the West than terse diary entries recorded. Memory preserved additional information that Brigham Young and his associates retained from these and perhaps other important meetings with the Prophet about the West. For example, as the Mormons departed Nauvoo in 1846 Orson Hyde explained:

Joseph Smith declared in Council that it was the will & mind of God to go to the West — said he you will not be driven — finish the temple if you can . . . [but] if your enemies come upon you flee to the West.³⁶

In Winter Quarters a few months later Brigham Young spoke of Joseph’s prayer that the Lord would lead them to a more healthy country “where we would not be having to bury our friends every day. I know,” he affirmed, “it was the design of Joseph to leave Nauvoo & flee to the Mts.”³⁷ A sample reminiscence from Utah similarly reflects the Prophet’s Nauvoo concerns:

In the days of Joseph [said Young] we have sat many hours at a time conversing about this very country. Joseph has often said, “If I were only in the Rocky Mountains with a hundred faithful men, I would then be happy, and ask no odds of mobocrats.”³⁸

³³Joseph Smith Diary, February 20, 1844.

³⁴Ibid., February 23, 1844.

³⁵Wilford Woodruff Diary, February 21, and 23, 1844.

³⁶Thomas Bullock Minutes, April 8, 1846.

³⁷Church Historian’s Office Journal, December 2, 1847.

³⁸Brigham Young Discourse, December 11, 1864, *Journal of Discourses* 11:16.

The Rocky Mountains as a place of safety had been part of the discussion of the West since at least 1840. As noted, however, Nauvoo conditions in 1844 underscored the practical urgency to establish such a retreat, leading Joseph Smith to conclude that if decisive action were not taken, the eventual result would be a city "in ashes and we in our Gore."³⁹ These realities underlay the February 20–23 discussions about the West and the statement delivered to the council February 25:

President Joseph Smith Prophesied that within five years we should be rid of our old enemies . . . & wishes us to record it that when it comes to pass that we need not say we had forgotten the saying.⁴⁰

The one sure way to be rid of enemies was to be removed to a safe retreat far away.

Perhaps because there were too few volunteers, more likely because of increasing preparations for the forthcoming political campaign, Joseph Smith never dispatched the planned-for western expedition. First, he postponed further consideration until he organized the Council of Fifty as an enlarged forum to oversee such matters, and then, in the new Council, reached the decision to focus on other projects until after the election. In the meantime, members of the Council of Fifty, including several apostles, would petition Congress for assistance in launching a major western expedition.

One of the first items of business in the Council of Fifty was to discuss planting a Mormon settlement in Texas. Bishop George Miller and Apostle Lyman Wight, leaders of a Wisconsin work colony supplying lumber for the Nauvoo Temple, wrote to the Prophet requesting authorization to found in Texas, where they already had connections, "a place of gathering for all the South." George Miller arrived in Nauvoo March 8 with the proposal. Two days later the presidency and Quorum of the Twelve discussed it with Bishop Miller and the following day, March 11, formally organized the Council of Fifty — and continued discussions on Texas.⁴¹

The Texas proposal dovetailed nicely with the Prophet's expansive plans. The time had come, he felt, to move beyond Nauvoo. After the election the West would be explored; in the meantime, if there was an opening in Texas, it should be followed up.⁴² Although there may have been in Texas the potential

³⁹Nauvoo City Council draft minutes, June 8, 1844, Church Archives.

⁴⁰Wilford Woodruff Diary, February 25, 1844. While still enroute to the mountains in 1847, the anniversary of Joseph Smith's death reminded the pioneers of his promise of a safe place. Though feeling keenly the loss of their leader, said Heber C. Kimball, "we cannot but rejoice that we are now as far on our way to the wilderness . . . and that we are already measurably beyond the jurisdiction and reach of our persecutors, with a prospect of soon seeing our families, friends, and the saints located in a place of peace and safety." Heber C. Kimball Diary, June 27, 1847, Heber C. Kimball Papers, Church Archives.

⁴¹See Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:222, for Miller's arrival, and 6:254–61, for the letters and councils. For the Council of Fifty itself, see D. Michael Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844 to 1945," *BYU Studies* 20 (Winter 1980): 163–97, and Andrew F. Ehat, "'It Seems Like Heaven Began on Earth': Joseph Smith and the Constitution of the Kingdom of God," *BYU Studies* 20 (Spring 1980): 253–80.

⁴²Not only might Texas be a gathering place for Saints from the South, as the Wisconsin proposal suggested, there were also Indians in and near Texas that needed the gospel and might become allies. No doubt Mormon leaders also perceived diplomatic advantage in having good

for unique advantages — and the idea of a regional stronghold there was certainly in harmony with the ultimate goal of expansion throughout the continent — there is no evidence that Joseph Smith and his associates looked to Texas as the location for a new Church headquarters. For that, it seems clear, they continued to look to the isolated mountains of the West.⁴³ The Council of Fifty, therefore, concluded both to initiate contact with Sam Houston and the Texas government and to seek support from Congress for the proposed venture in the Far West.⁴⁴

Available minutes and diaries do not preserve the details of Council of Fifty discussions in March, April, and May relating to expanded settlement and a future headquarters in the western mountains. But Joseph Smith and other leaders publicly taught during this period an expanded conception of Zion. At April Conference, after alluding to the great discussion in the Church about the gathering and about the location of Zion, the Prophet proclaimed: “The whole [of] America is Zion,” both North and South America “is the Zion where the Mountain of the Lords house shall be.” Once the temple was finished elders could “build up churches where ever the people received the gospel [in] sufficient [numbers],” and “those who do not wish to come hither to live [in Nauvoo] can bring their families and attend [to] the ordinances and return” to other strongholds.⁴⁵ Although the elders would “go through all America & build up Churches untill all Zion is built up,” this could not commence “until the Temple is built up here and the Elders endowed.”⁴⁶

While Joseph Smith and his associates did not look to Nauvoo as the permanent headquarters of Zion, they did anticipate that it might continue as a temple city even while the Saints established in the mountains of the West another corner stake of Zion.⁴⁷ Speaking at the Prophet’s urging and after his

relations with the Texas government no matter the direction of future Mormon expansion. Finally, looking at all of North and South America as Zion, they may have favored this project as a step toward the vast populations of Mexico and South America.

⁴³Like the Pacific Coast, Texas seems never to have been viewed as a suitable place for a headquarters. Instead of isolated refuge, they offered the same liabilities as places the Saints had already settled. Regardless of initial welcome, these widely publicized lands already attracted other settlers including, especially according to Orson Hyde, in the case of Texas, many of “our old enemies, the mobocrats of Missouri.” Orson Hyde to Joseph Smith and Council, April 25, 1844, in Smith, *History of the Church* 6:372. That this was fully recognized as a major liability becomes more clear below.

⁴⁴For an overview of the shortlived Texas efforts see Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), pp. 294–95; for information on the efforts of Orson Hyde, et al., with Congress see Smith, *History of the Church* 6:274–77, 282, 369–76. Because of intense national interest in Oregon and California, Mormon leaders thought it worthwhile to petition for Congressional support of their efforts to move American citizens into those territories.

⁴⁵Joseph Smith Diary, April 8, 1844. See also Thomas Bullock minutes and Wilford Woodruff Diary, same date. Though perhaps with less emphasis, Joseph Smith spoke about this concept at least as early as 1840. See Dean C. Jessee, “Joseph Smith’s 19 July 1840 Discourse,” *BYU Studies* 19 (Spring 1979): 392.

⁴⁶Wilford Woodruff Diary, April 8, 1844. For reemphasis of Joseph’s priority of the temple (“we must do all we can to build the Temple — [&] after that to build up Churches” in other parts of the Land of Zion), see remarks of Hyrum Smith and Brigham Young in Thomas Bullock minutes, April 8, 1844.

⁴⁷“Their will be some place ordained for the redeeming of the dead [—] I think this place will be the one,” said Joseph Smith, in Wilford Woodruff Diary, April 8, 1844. Compare this with

instruction, George J. Adams proclaimed that same conference “that there shall be a literal Zion established in a literal manner” as the scriptures testified, and “that it shall be at the tops of the mountains and all nations shall flow unto it.”⁴⁸

Documents created during the Prophet’s lifetime, then, confirm what Brigham Young and his associates ever after affirmed: during the last months of his life, Joseph Smith enthusiastically preached an enlarged concept of Zion and, especially in connection with the newly organized Council of Fifty, promoted plans for expanded Mormon settlement in the West. As summarized in Joseph Smith’s history, the Council of Fifty discussed how the Mormons could obtain their rights from the government and secure “a resting place in the mountains, or some uninhabited region, where we can enjoy the liberty of conscience guaranteed to us by the Constitution.”⁴⁹ William Clayton, Council of Fifty member and keeper of its official records, wrote a few months after these discussions led by Joseph that the Council had prepared to seek a healthful and peaceful home for the Saints in the West where a specially prepared ensign of truth or standard of liberty might be raised as a beacon to all nations.⁵⁰ Writing from Nauvoo, Parley Pratt summarized what had been decided by the Prophet and his associates in these councils: “Our intention is to maintain and build up Nauvoo, and settle other places too,” including a new headquarters city in the West.⁵¹

Joseph Smith never had the opportunity to implement these plans. With the apostles in the East, petitions to Congress still pending, the political campaign hardly launched, the temple not finished, and the western expedition yet to be dispatched, Joseph and Hyrum Smith were shot to death at Carthage Jail.⁵²

Thomas Bullock minutes of the same date: “I verily believe this to be the place” — and with the suggestion noted in the Joseph Smith Diary version that the fact of having a temple was more important than where the temple was: the “lord hath ordained” that “these last & most important ordinances must be in a house — provided for the purpose — when [where] we can get a house built first there is the place.” In spite of the evident flexibility, they clearly anticipated Nauvoo would be the place. As Willard Richards wrote to Orson Hyde in May 1844, in Smith, *History of the Church* 6:406: “Nauvoo will be a ‘corner stake of Zion’ forever, we most assuredly expect. Here are the house and the ordinance, extend where else we may.”

⁴⁸George J. Adams remarks, Thomas Bullock minutes, April 8, 1844, abbreviations expanded. See Isaiah 2:2–3.

⁴⁹Smith, *History of the Church* 6:261. Brigham Young’s history simply mentions the goal “to inform ourselves of the unoccupied territory open to settlers.” See entry for March 11, 1844 in “History of Brigham Young,” *Deseret News*, March 24, 1858.

⁵⁰See William Clayton Diary, January 1, and March 1, 1845, 253–80. For information on the flag or ensign to the nations see D. Michael Quinn, “The Flag of the Kingdom of God,” *BYU Studies* 14 (Autumn 1973): 105–14.

⁵¹Parley P. Pratt to Isaac Rogers, September 6, 1845, in Christian, “Mormon Foreknowledge of the American Far West,” p. 112. Pratt’s letter indicates plans for a headquarters in the West while Nauvoo remained a temple city and other settlements were established — details also suggested in the Prophet’s recorded 1844 statements.

⁵²Before going to Carthage, the Smith brothers had crossed the Mississippi to flee, it is often assumed, to safety in the West. Given the plans and the conviction that safety could be found in the West, the impulse was probably inevitable. However, it should be noted that there was as yet no prepared place of refuge to flee to and no expedition ready to accompany them. Perhaps realizing this, they apparently decided not to head for the mountains immediately but, at least as a

Brigham Young later insisted that had the Prophet lived the Saints would have settled in the Far West before 1847. Joseph had already reached firm decisions about the West, the need for a place of refuge was increasingly evident, and, with or without government assistance, he planned to move. As Heber Kimball wrote from Washington a few weeks before the martyrdom, even though the chances for government assistance were slim, the Saints would nonetheless immigrate to a new home, "and it will not be long before this exodus will comence."⁵³ Had death not intervened, it seems likely that Smith would have dispatched the planned-for expedition. It is also possible that the controversies swirling around the Mormon Prophet might have forced the Mormons from Nauvoo even earlier had he not been killed. As it was, the murders at Carthage — and the patient Mormon response to them — temporarily defused the bomb, providing a period of peace during which Brigham Young and the Twelve, as new leaders, turned first to other priorities.

Joseph Smith's plans for removal specified "after the temple is completed" or, as Orson Hyde remembered it, "finish the temple if you can." Committed to carrying out "all the measures of Joseph,"⁵⁴ the Saints under the Twelve pushed temple construction ahead faster than ever before.⁵⁵ By January 1845 work had progressed enough for the Twelve to announce that ordinances would begin in December. Also in January 1845, Brigham Young received reports that enemies had determined they "must drive the Mormons from Nauvoo *before* the temple was don[e] or they never could." Realizing that a commitment to finish the temple at all costs might result in bloodshed, Young noted in his diary: "I inquired of the Lord whether we should stay here and finish the templ[e.] the ansure was we should."⁵⁶

Dissenters and anti-Mormons were correct in seeing a connection between the temple and Mormon willingness to leave Nauvoo, but they had it reversed: until the temple was completed the Mormons would not depart without a fight;

preliminary, to meet their families outside Nauvoo. See Linda King Newell, "The Last Crossing: Did Emma Smith 'Entreat' Joseph Back Across the River to His Death," (Paper presented at Mormon History Association, Rexburg, Idaho, May 2, 1981). Since they ultimately concluded to return to Nauvoo and to arrest, one can only speculate about what their full intention might have been in initially crossing the river.

⁵³Heber C. Kimball to Helen Mar Kimball, June 9, 1844, as quoted in Christian, "Mormon Foreknowledge of the American Far West," pp. 91–92.

⁵⁴Esplin, "Joseph, Brigham and the Twelve," pp. 328–31.

⁵⁵The case of Lyman Wight is instructive here. Even while Joseph Smith lived, Lyman Wight and associates in the Pineries had become discouraged with the pace of Nauvoo developments, especially the failure, as they saw it, to complete the temple in a timely fashion as commanded by revelation. Consequently, they had considered turning their own energies immediately to projects held in abeyance awaiting the temple, leaving the Nauvoo Saints to their fate. It was over this willingness to ignore the temple and do things out of sequence that Lyman Wight and Brigham Young quarreled after Smith's death, not directly over a proposed settlement in Texas. Although reluctantly, Brigham Young did authorize Wight to take *only* his original company from the Wisconsin Pineries to pursue the Texas project. He publicly proclaimed against the movement only after Wight's public enthusiasm for Texas threatened prematurely to draw off people and resources needed for the temple. Wight, it should be noted, had not been in Nauvoo for the Council of Fifty discussions of March and April, nor had he heard the April conference admonitions about the priority of the temple.

⁵⁶Brigham Young Diary, January 23–24, 1845, emphasis added.

but once the temple had fulfilled, however briefly, its purpose, it would take very little to "drive them" out.⁵⁷

By spring, when it appeared to Governor Thomas Ford that the Mormons had no intention of leaving, he wrote to Brigham Young. First he tried to nudge Young by contrasting the peace they could enjoy by themselves in a new country with the troublesome neighbors around Nauvoo, then added the clincher:

I was informed by Gen Joseph Smith last summer that he contemplated a removal west; and from what I learned from him and others at that time I think if he had lived he would have begun to move in the matter before this time.⁵⁸

Young did not need the governor's reminder of Joseph's intentions. As early as January 1, 1845 he had "counseled on the subject of settling a new country," and, by April, when the governor wrote, decisions had already been made.⁵⁹

Brigham Young reconvened the Council of Fifty in February 1845. By March that body met to discuss filling "Joseph's measures originally adopted in this Council," that is, "going West to seek out a location and a home where the Saints can dwell in peace and health." As before, plans for the West and Mormon-Indian relations were intimately related. Jonathan Dunham, the Indian missionary of 1840, and an Indian of the Oneida nation, Lewis Dana, were among the new members then meeting for the first time with the Council. Both men, with others, received a confidential call to labor among the western tribes and to learn more about the West, a continuation of earlier efforts "to unite the Lamanites and find a home for the Saints."⁶⁰

By February and March Brigham Young had begun to seriously consider *where* the Saints should locate. As had Joseph, he eagerly sought information about the West, correlating all he could learn with the needs of the Saints. He also pondered the Prophet's conversations about the West and sought divine guidance. And then he settled on the interior mountain country of the West as the probable area for a future home. "I am bound to seek a healthy place for this people," he told the Seventies in early March, and "mean to go there Myself as soon as the Temple is finished." He recounted to them that he had dreamt of having searched with the Prophet for such a location. They came to a mountain with several trails, and, spotting a route that Joseph had overlooked, Brigham

⁵⁷Ronald K. Esplin, "Brigham Young and the Power of the Apostleship: Defending the Kingdom Through Prayer, 1844-1845," *The Eighth Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium: A Sesquicentennial Look at Church History*, January 26, 1980 (Provo, Utah: Church Educational System, 1980) pp. 106-10.

⁵⁸Thomas Ford to Brigham Young, April 8, 1845, Brigham Young Papers.

⁵⁹George A. Smith Diary, January 1, 1845, George A. Smith Papers, Church Archives.

⁶⁰William Clayton Diary, 269. See also entries for April 11 and 15, 1844, p. 271. Dunham died in the summer of 1845 while on this mission.

As with Dunham's 1840 mission to the Indians, this mission, too, was confidential. Initially only those in the Council or part of the mission knew of its intent. Joseph and George Herring, Indian brothers involved in the enterprise, visited Nauvoo a few months later. After a month of close association with Hosea Stout, head of the Nauvoo Police but not a member of the Council of Fifty, they confided to him and a companion "the nature of their mission," which, noted Stout, "was not understood by us heretofore." Sensing immediately the mission's significance, Stout concluded it "will yet make a great alteration in their affairs and ours." Hosea Stout Diary, October 29, 1845, 1:87.

arrived first at the desired destination. "I thought," he said, "we had found a most beautiful place for a city."⁶¹ Ten days later Brigham privately mentioned his interest in "settling the interior of the country."⁶²

It is doubtful that Brigham Young ever considered the Pacific Coast as the location for the new headquarters. For years he and others had thought of "a place of safety preparing . . . away towards the Rocky Mountains," to use the 1840 words of Jonathan Dunham. The coast, though hundreds of miles further removed from a promised Zion in Missouri, offered a less-secure refuge than would the Rocky Mountain region. Rather than a garden spot where the Saints would have to compete with others for such choice land, Young sought a "place apart." As early as 1838, according to later memory, he had understood "upon natural principles" that his people "had to go to a country that the Gentiles do not desire," a conviction that clearly influenced decisions now.⁶³ By 1845 coastal Oregon and California, as well as Texas, each had boosters and increasing immigration. By contrast, the Rocky Mountain interior remained little talked about and virtually uninhabited by whites. Though they might retain Nauvoo as a temple city — the eastern rim of a great wheel — and use the western coast or Texas for foreign immigration, the hub would be in the mountainous interior.

During the Council of Fifty meeting of April 11, 1845, John Taylor put the finishing touches on a new song, "The Upper California," whose verses record the developing plans for removal to the West:

The Upper California. O! that's the land for me,
It lies between the Mountains and great Pacific Sea. . . .
We'll ask our cousin Lemuel to join us heart and hand:
And spread abroad our curtains through fair Zion's land. . . .
Then join with me my brethren, and let us hasten there;
We'll lift our glorious standard and raise our house of prayer.⁶⁴

Letters written by Council members that summer revealed more details of their plans for removal to the West. One first mentioned several possible locations on the Pacific Coast, noting that "we shall commence forming a settlement in that region during the coming season" — a plan fulfilled by Sam Brannan's sea migration. But the main settlement, continued the letter, "will probably be in the neighborhood of Lake Tampanogos as that is represented as

⁶¹Minutes, March 9, 1845, Seventies Book B., Church Archives. This is not the last time Young dreamed about finding the right place in the mountains. See Willard Richards Diary, November 6 and 8, 1846, Church Archives.

⁶²Hosea Stout Diary, March 19, 1845, 1:28.

⁶³Brigham Young Discourse, February 17, 1856, *Journal of Discourses* 3:210. Compare this with Brigham Young to President Polk, August 9, 1846, Brigham Young Papers, where he said they were headed to a region where "a good living" would require hard labor, hence an area not coveted by others. See also Miscellaneous Minutes, November 14, 1847, Church Archives, where Young said he wanted a country "not fit for any but Mormons," and Young discourses, January 5, 1860 and June 7, 1857 in *Journal of Discourses* 9:105 and 4:434–44. Mormon leaders looked to the mountains also because of a belief that they would there fulfill Isaiah's prophecy of a House of the Lord in the tops of the mountains. Compare Isaiah 2:2–3 with Young's remarks as reported in John D. Lee Diary, January 13, 1846.

⁶⁴William Clayton Diary, pp. 271–80. "Cousin Lemuel" was a designation used by Young and others as early as 1840 when referring obliquely to contacts with the Lamanites of the West.

a most delightful district and no settlement near there."⁶⁵ Another letter, though less precise as to location, also described the plan: "I expect we shall stop near the Rocky Mountains about 800 miles nearer than the coast," wrote Parley Pratt, "and there make a stand until we are able to enlarge and to extend to the coast."⁶⁶

During the spring and summer of 1845, Mormon leaders received important additional information about the region that now held their interest. As early as 1843 the *Nauvoo Neighbor* had published extracts from John C. Frémont's first expedition to the Rockies, including detailed descriptions of the route to Fort Laramie. Based on preliminary reports, the *Neighbor* announced March 19, 1845 that the report of Frémont's second expedition emphasized the region of the "Great Salt Lake." In September the paper published extracts from the report in which "the great Salt Lake . . . is for the first time revealed to our view by one who has surveyed its shores. . . . The bear River valley . . . is for the first time described." Here Mormon leaders first learned that the region was a basin, the "Great Basin, as Captain Frémont calls it, and of which he is the first to announce its existence to the world." No doubt thinking of Mormon hopes for a place of refuge, editor John Taylor noted that a "basin which may hold such a kingdom as France, and which has for its rim a circle of mountains whose summits penetrate the regions of eternal snows is certainly a new and grand subject to be revealed."⁶⁷ By fall Mormon leaders received the full published accounts of both Frémont expeditions. They also had Lansford Hastings's descriptions of the Bear River Valley region. During the summer Hastings lectured in Nauvoo, promoting Upper California — of which this area was a part — and the *Nauvoo Neighbor* printed extracts from his published guide.⁶⁸

The region of greatest Mormon interest is perhaps best described as that portion of the Great Basin in the vicinity of Utah Lake, the Salt Lake, and the Bear River, with their associated valleys.⁶⁹ Although Mormon leaders understood in 1845 that the Utah or Timpanogos area was the southern part of this region and that the Bear River Valley referred to its northern and eastern limits, descriptive terms were imprecisely used and, to some extent, interchangeable. Some of the valleys along the Bear were contiguous to those associated with the Salt Lake, and to Mormon leaders in Nauvoo the "valley of

⁶⁵Council to Addison Pratt, August 28, 1845 in Christian, "Mormon Foreknowledge of the American Far West," p. 111. In Frémont's 1845 report, Utah or Timpanogos Lake, although known to be fresh, is described as a south arm of the Salt Lake.

⁶⁶Parley P. Pratt to Isaac Rogers, September 6, 1845, in Christian, "Mormon Foreknowledge of the American Far West," p. 112.

⁶⁷*Nauvoo Neighbor*, September 17, 1845. Although mountain men and earlier explorers had circumscribed the lake and found no outlet, the fact was not widely known until Frémont's published reports.

⁶⁸*Nauvoo Neighbor*, August 13, 1845.

⁶⁹For another view of early Mormon decisions about settlement in this region, see Richard H. Jackson, "Myth and Reality: Environmental Perceptions of the Mormons, 1840–1865, An Historical Geosophy," (Ph.D. diss., Clark University, 1970).

Jackson's conclusions about when Mormon leaders decided on the Salt Lake Valley suffer from a reliance upon later edited versions of the documents, printed versions that sometimes differ in phrasing and specific terminology from the originals.

the Salt Lake" described not a precise location but a large expanse (several related valleys, it turned out) east of the Great Salt Lake. It was within this broad region of perhaps two thousand square miles that Brigham Young and his associates expected, as early as 1845, to establish a new headquarters for the Saints. This Orson Pratt emphasized upon first entering the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. It required two years of striving, he told his companions, "to get to this place, which was had in contemplation before we left the Temple at Nauvoo as the place of our location somewhere in this great valley."⁷⁰

Mormon leaders felt that there was one particular place better than all others for their headquarters settlement, a specific location that God had reserved for them and to which He would lead them.⁷¹ While still in Nauvoo, George A. Smith later explained, they "sought the Lord to know . . . where they should lead the people for safety." Fasting and praying daily, Brigham Young, according to Apostle Smith, had a vision of Joseph Smith showing him a specific mountain top with an ensign or flag flying above it and telling him: "Build under the point where the colors fall and you will prosper and have peace."⁷²

Contemporary evidence confirms that before Brigham Young left Nauvoo he had full confidence that he would find the proper location. Only a month before the exodus began Young told the Council of Fifty that prophecies would be unfulfilled unless "the House of the Lord should be reared in the Tops of the Mountains and the Proud Banner of liberty wave over the valleys that are within the Mountains." "I know where the spot is," he told them, and "I [k]no[w] how to make the flag."⁷³ His mind was settled about the matter partly because he now had a key, a mental image, to help him recognize the precise location when he saw it. Joseph "sent out" the colors, Young explained, and said "wherever the coulours settle there would be the spot."⁷⁴ The significance of the ensign and the peak during the pioneers' first week in the Salt Lake Valley confirms, as shall be seen, that this was no idle comment.

In September 1845 the Council of Fifty quietly began to prepare for removal. On the ninth, council members agreed that President Young should select a vanguard to head west in the spring.⁷⁵ Before Young reported his selection two days later, anti-Mormons commenced hostilities against settlements near Nauvoo. Within a week, before Mormon arms or resolve had really been tested, Church leaders "capitulated." "We the undersigned," read a proclamation to the mob, "inform you that it is our intention to leave Nauvoo

⁷⁰Norton Jacobs Diary, July 23, 1847, typescript, Church Archives.

⁷¹See Brigham Young Discourse, February 14, 1853, *Journal of Discourses* 1:279. This idea, implicit in the 1840 phrase "a place preparing in the West," was immortalized by William Clayton in his 1846 hymn "All is Well," where he wrote: "We'll find the place which God for us prepared, Far away in the West." The concept is implicit in many documents of the period.

⁷²George Albert Smith Discourse, June 20, 1869, *Journal of Discourses* 13:85–86.

⁷³Young referred, no doubt, to Joseph Smith's earlier instruction about making a Flag of the Kingdom or Ensign to the Nations. See Quinn, "The Flag of the Kingdom." See also Minutes, February 26, 1847, Brigham Young Papers, for a Winter Quarters council meeting that discussed the colors and dimensions of this flag which was to be large enough to fly from a hilltop and be viewed from a distance. Before his death Smith had begun such a flag, claimed council participants, not to be flown in Nauvoo but "to be erected some where else," i.e. in their new home.

⁷⁴John D. Lee Diary, January 13, 1846.

⁷⁵William Clayton Diary, p. 272.

and the country next spring.”⁷⁶ Brigham Young long remembered the mob’s surprise at their willingness to depart, for, although the Council had already decided to send a large body “to prepare a way for a safe retreat,” it had till then been thought “proper not to reveal the secret.”⁷⁷ Far from causing the exodus from Nauvoo, the mob merely provided an opportunity for announcing a decision already made.

The short-lived violence of September 1845 and the threat of more did have an impact on the exodus, of course. Mob activity “put the gathering spirit into the hearts of the brethren,” to use Brigham Young’s phrase.⁷⁸ The violence also influenced the decision, apparently made in the fall of 1845, to focus all resources — except for completing the temple for ordinance work — on the exodus and abandon the hope of maintaining Nauvoo as a temple city. Instead of a preliminary exploring and colonizing expedition followed by an exodus in stages, the Saints undertook a mass exodus which the mobs helped complete in September 1846. But even had there been no violence, the western movement would likely have begun in 1846.

Although Brigham Young publicly announced in September 1845 the decision to leave Nauvoo, he made no mention of a destination. During the several weeks of discussion with non-Mormons that followed the outbreak of violence, he again pointedly refrained from revealing the true destination. “All kept dark . . . pulled the wool over their eyes,” Young later said in describing the conversations.⁷⁹ As a ploy, Mormon leaders repeatedly stressed Vancouver Island as a potential location. In dealing with General John Hardin, for instance, they thought it “proper not to reveal the secret of our intentions to flee to the mountains,” so as a “put off, it was communicated in the strictest confidence” to the General, who promised never to tell, that they planned to settle Vancouver Island. “This report, however, was industriously circulated, as we anticipated it would be.”⁸⁰ The fact that they were sending at the same time a shipload of emigrants to the Pacific Coast also served to disguise intentions.⁸¹

The reticence of Mormon leaders to reveal their intentions extended even to relations with the Saints. “Let every man learn to hold his tongue,” Young counseled in the conference after the public announcement. As to a destination, he alluded to “many Countries not yet explored,” mentioned Vancouver Island, about which they had good reports, but publicly would conclude only

⁷⁶Proclamation to Col. Levi Williams, Broadside, September 16, 1845, Church Archives.

⁷⁷Brigham Young Discourse, July 24, 1854, *Journal of Discourses* 2:22–23.

⁷⁸Brigham Young to Sam Brannan, September 15, 1845, Brigham Young Papers. For more information about reactions to September violence see Esplin, “Brigham Young and the Power of the Apostleship,” pp. 113–17.

⁷⁹Thomas Bullock Minutes, September 24, 1848.

⁸⁰Brigham Young Discourse, July 24, 1854, *Journal of Discourses* 2:22–23. See also Brigham Young Discourse, December 11, 1864, *Journal of Discourses* 11:18. For the true role of Vancouver Island in Mormon plans as a potential place to locate British emigrants, see Christian, “Mormon Westward Migration,” pp. 130–36.

⁸¹For more examples of the conscious effort not to reveal their plans, see Thomas Bullock Minutes, September 24, 1848 and [Orson Hyde?] to the *Illinois State Register*, February 27, 1846, as quoted in Christian, “Mormon Foreknowledge of the American Far West,” p. 146.

that they were headed into the wilderness "but where we go we know not."⁸² Brigham Young's letter answering Samuel Brannan's insistent questions as he prepared to sail for the Pacific Coast provides the most interesting example of this refusal to expose the council's decisions. Where would he find them, Brannan asked? "I will say we have not determined to what place we shall go," Young wrote, "but shall make a location where we can live in peace." When will you leave? "When the grass is sufficient." By what route? "The best route we can find." How many are going? "Uncertain but all . . . are a mind to go." How long will the journey require? "I will tell you when we get to the end."⁸³

Though this approach kept enemies uninformed, it also left many of the Saints in the dark. In the spring we start "for California," wrote one Nauvoo sister to her family, "and I cannot say but we shall go to Van Couver's Islands."⁸⁴ The official proclamation to the Church a few weeks later clarified little. Mention of the intention to plant a crop "in the neighborhood of the Rocky Mountains" left the possibility that the area would serve as a half-way station rather than a destination.⁸⁵ At an organizing meeting on the eve of the exodus, Young cautioned: "Keep all things secret which shall [be] said or done during the day," and even when the movement was well underway he instructed a letter writer to "say nothing about our exit to the Mountains."⁸⁶

Brigham Young was concerned that one of two consequences might occur if their full intentions were discovered too soon. Either enemies would seek to prevent their departure, perhaps with the assistance of the government, or someone would preempt them on the very lands they intended to settle.⁸⁷ These same concerns, it should be noted, influenced the decision to depart in February rather than in the spring.

October conference, 1845, was largely devoted to preparing the Saints to leave Nauvoo. Brigham Young and his fellow apostles presented the exodus as a "glorious emergency," something they genuinely believed. Young advised speakers to "avoid reference to mobs, troubles &c," stressing instead "that we are going cheerfully."⁸⁸ In this spirit John Taylor emphasized the "Satisfaction of going to Calaforna," where they would be free from oppression. In a similar vein, Parley Pratt compared removal to transplanting young fruit trees from a

⁸²Thomas Bullock Minutes, October 12, 1845. Compare this with George A. Smith to Wilford Woodruff, November 9, 1845, Wilford Woodruff Papers, where he describes his preparations to "move beyond the Rocky Mountains" but in a note adds that he was fitting his own wagons for "Van Couver's Island, Salt Lake or somewhere else."

⁸³Brigham Young to Sam Brannan, December 26, 1845, Brigham Young Papers.

⁸⁴Minirva Corey to her sister, December 8, 1845, Utah State Historical Society, in Christian, "Mormon Foreknowledge of the American Far West," p. 124.

⁸⁵High Council Proclamation, Broadside, January 20, 1846, Church Archives.

⁸⁶Undated minutes of organizing meeting, ca. February 4–5, 1846, Brigham Young Papers; and John D. Lee Diary, June 12, 1846. See also George A. Smith Discourse, July 24, 1854, *Journal of Discourses* 2:23, and Brigham Young Discourse, September 13, 1857, *Journal of Discourses* 5:236.

⁸⁷There were rumors, none of them substantive, that the government would intervene. From the East Brannan had so warned, and in his earlier letter Governor Ford had counseled that if they concluded to migrate to California to establish an independent government they must not let it be known or "it would become the duty of the United States to prevent your emigration." Ford to Brigham Young, April 8, 1845. See also Thomas Bullock Minutes, September 24, 1848.

⁸⁸Willard Richards Diary, October 4, 1845.

small nursery to a field large enough for mature trees to bear fruit. "The Lord designs to lead us to a wider field of action," he explained. "This people are fast approaching that point which ancient prophets have along since pointed out as the destiny of the saints of the last days." "We want a country," insisted Pratt, "where we shall have room to expand."⁸⁹

After conference Brigham Young issued a circular to all Church branches informing them of the intended spring departure. The circular described a "crisis of extraordinary and thrilling interest" and advised the Saints to "wake up . . . to the present glorious emergency in which the God of Israel has placed you." Because the Prophet Joseph had foreseen that "this removal" would come, they were prepared, continued the text, to leave for "a far distant region of the West" where they would begin "a new epoch . . . in the history of the Church."⁹⁰ When Orson Pratt, presiding in the East, learned of the plans to leave Nauvoo, he could hardly contain himself. "I want to fly upon the wings of the wind & be with you," he wrote Brigham. He asked permission to join them immediately, then added: "Should my feelings get the upper hand" and "I start forthwith for Nauvoo, I hope you will forgive."⁹¹

Such enthusiasm, combined with the optimism of other leaders, proved contagious. Once most of the Saints had received temple ordinances, the "spirit of removal" took such deep root in the "great majority," read a Brigham Young letter as the Saints streamed from Nauvoo, that "they could not have been hired to stay even under the most favorable circumstances." Cheerfully they now left their temple to implement "the plans of brother Joseph and fulfill the will of the Lord." The time had fully come, asserted the letter, for the Church to be "transplanted into a far distant country in order to carry out the designs of our heavenly father."⁹² With the long-awaited departure at hand, Young counseled Nauvoo residents, "We want to go whether we are ready or not."⁹³

After crossing the Mississippi, Brigham Young's personal enthusiasm for the western move seemed to increase with each mile. "Nauvoo is no place for the Saints," he told his brother soon after departing.

Do not think . . . I hate to leave my house and home. No! far from that. I am so free from bondage at this time, that Nauvoo looks like a prison to me. It looks pleasant ahead, but dark to look back.

To a wife still in Nauvoo he wrote asking that she travel with another family. He could not bring himself to return for her, he apologized, but "think I shall goe further west instead. . . . we feeel quite happy here in camp and are bound for the West."⁹⁴

Throughout the western journey Brigham Young remained vague re-

⁸⁹Hosea Stout Diary, October 5, 1845, 1:80, and *Times and Seasons* 6 (November 1, 1845): 1010–11.

⁹⁰Circular to the Churches, Broadside, October 8, 1845, Church Archives.

⁹¹Orson Pratt to Brigham Young, October 21, 1845, Brigham Young Papers.

⁹²Brigham Young and Council to James Emmett, March 26, 1846, Brigham Young Papers.

⁹³Undated minutes of organizing meeting, ca. February 4–5, 1846, Church Archives.

⁹⁴Brigham Young to Joseph Young, March 9, 1846, Brigham Young Papers, and Brigham Young to Harriet Cook, March 14, 1846, photocopy, Church Archives, original in private possession.

garding a precise destination, as if he could not be certain until he was upon the ground. Rather than a liability, this was seen as a parallel with ancient Israel traveling under God's direction to an unseen promised land,⁹⁵ and that parallel was emphasized in later reminiscences. On the seventh anniversary of leaving Nauvoo, for example, Young emphasized that they had crossed the Mississippi for the West "not knowing, at that time, wither we were going, but firmly believing that the Lord had in reserve for us a good place in the mountains, and that He would lead us directly to it."⁹⁶ Contemporary records confirm that even while Young declared his intention to "cross the mountain[s] to the great bason," the tentativeness remained. As he noted in an 1846 letter to Orson Hyde reviewing their plans, "To define the exact spot we cannot at present."⁹⁷

Rather than mentioning the Salt Lake Valley as their destination, Mormon leaders in mid-1846 referred most frequently to the Bear River Valley. For example, following a June discussion with American Fur Company agents Sarpee and Green about the roads, climate, and appearance of "the great Bear river valley," Brigham Young several times remarked that he intended to head for that area.⁹⁸ The most detailed documentation of intentions, however, included both the Salt Lake and the Bear River regions. After consultations with non-Mormon friend and consultant Thomas L. Kane, Brigham Young wrote President James K. Polk that the Mormons expected to reside "west of the Rocky Mountains, & within the Bason of the great Salt Lake or bear river valley."⁹⁹ Kane himself informed Commissioner of Indian Affairs William Medill that "the ultimate destination of the whole people . . . is the country east of the Utah and Salt Lakes and West of the Rocky Mountains," adding that the area they would occupy could not, at this point, "be more closely defined than this." He also penned a similar but more technical description to President Polk, noting that this was a change from their earlier supposed destination near the Pacific.¹⁰⁰ For his part, Young continued to acknowledge the possibility of a number of Mormon settlements in the West, including some on the Pacific Coast, but his main concern was to establish a new headquarters and temple city in the Great Basin. For the present, he was certain, most resources must be concentrated there.¹⁰¹

From their post on the Missouri River, Mormon leaders continued from

⁹⁵See, for example, Heber Kimball's explanation: "we are sojourning to a land west not knowing whether [we] go — Just as it was with the ancient covenant People of the Lord." John D. Lee Diary, June 7, 1846.

⁹⁶Brigham Young Discourse, February 14, 1853, *Journal of Discourses* 1:279.

⁹⁷Willard Richards Diary, March 8, 1846; and Brigham Young to Orson Hyde, April 2, 1846, Brigham Young Papers.

⁹⁸Willard Richards Diary, June 19, 1846; and Brigham Young to William Huntington, June 28, 1846, Brigham Young Papers. See also Young's letter to the Trustees, September 11, 1846, Brigham Young Papers, noting that they were headed to "the bear River valley" to "find a location" to plant and build homes.

⁹⁹Brigham Young to President James K. Polk, August 9, 1846, Brigham Young Papers.

¹⁰⁰For Kane's letters see Christian, "Mormon Westward Migration," pp. 117–18. Kane's description accurately pinpointed the center of the settlement to be.

¹⁰¹Although members of the Mormon Battalion might, for example, settle on the Pacific Coast, the next temple, according to Young, would not be on the coast but in the Rocky Mountains where the Twelve would reside and all would come for ordinances. Willard Richards Diary, July 15, 1846.

mid-1846 until their departure for the mountains the following spring, to gather information about the Great Basin.¹⁰² There is no evidence, however, that additional information changed now well-established plans. In September 1846 Brigham Young wrote that he intended to "fit out a company of men to go over to Bear river valley next spring and thus prepare a home for our women before we take them." On the eve of departure more than six months later it was still his plan "to proceede on [to] the great Basin without stoping . . . to locate a Stake of Zion and this fall come back after his family."¹⁰³

While Mormon leaders remained on the Missouri River, the New York Saints under Samuel Brannan sailed around South America to San Francisco, and the Mormon Battalion, a company of Mormon soldiers enlisted to secure California during the Mexican War, departed via the deserts of the Southwest. Without describing a precise location, Brigham Young communicated to both groups enough information that they could locate the pioneer company either en route or at their place of settlement.¹⁰⁴ Young instructed Sam Brannan to travel east from the coast via the south shore of Great Salt Lake toward Fort Bridger and South Pass until he found them. Their ultimate location he expected "will be west of the rocky Mountains. . . . perhaps in the great Bason as any where."¹⁰⁵ In February Young had thought to have the sick detachment of the Battalion, located at Pueblo, go immediately to Fort Laramie and plant. By March, however, the commander of the detachment told his men that they were instructed to go "to Salt Lake and there put in a crop of corn and wait there for the Church."¹⁰⁶ The instructions were to insure getting a crop in the ground rather than to reveal a specific location. Once en route, Young officially informed the Pueblo Saints that the pioneers' "destination is to find a place for a stake of Zion in some good healthy country which we anticipate will be in the Great Basin, or vicinity of the Great Salt Lake."¹⁰⁷ A few weeks later some of the Mormon soldiers in California prepared to move to the "Bear River Valley . . . where we expect to meet or find our people," while others heard that "the Saints were settling in the Great Salt Lake Valley."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰²For details about information received in Winter Quarters from western travelers, see Christian, "Mormon Westward Migration," pp. 144–62.

¹⁰³Hosea Stout Diary, September 9, 1846 and March 22, 1847, 1:192, 242. Sending a pioneer company ahead without families had long been the intention of Mormon leaders. As soon as the forward base had been located on the Missouri River in June 1846, Young hoped to send "with the least possible delay" a vanguard "to the Bear River valley, great basin, or salt lake." Brigham Young to William Huntington, June 28, 1846, Brigham Young Papers. Only the Federal Government's requisition for troops to serve in the Mexican War, combined with the lateness of the season, prevented a move then.

¹⁰⁴For a review of communication with the Battalion about the West, see John F. Yurtinus, "A Ram in the Thicket, the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War" (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1975), pp. 315–29, 585–90, 598–603, 607, 625; and Christian, "Mormon Westward Migration," pp. 93–111.

¹⁰⁵Brigham Young to Sam Brannan, June 6, 1847, Brigham Young Papers. Brannan apparently surmised as much and was already well on his way to meet the pioneers before the letter was written.

¹⁰⁶Yurtinus, "The Mormon Battalion," pp. 316–17.

¹⁰⁷Brigham Young to Porter Dowdle, Presiding Elder at Pueblo, May 10, 1847, Brigham Young Papers.

¹⁰⁸Christian, "Mormon Westward Migration," pp. 103–5.

This seeming confusion or lack of precision about a destination was due not to poor communication but to the fact that Mormon leaders had not yet determined an exact location. Furthermore, Brigham Young remained unwilling to proclaim a specific destination until he felt a personal confirmation that they had indeed reached the "place prepared." As he left Winter Quarters, Young wrote of heading "to the Mountains" or to the Great Basin "in search of a resting place." He would, he said, "point [out] the cite as the spirit directs."¹⁰⁹ En route, Brigham Young asserted that the pioneers strived "by every means to press forward & find the spot which the Lord shall point out as a Gathering place." They felt certain that the location could be found within, as Orson Pratt phrased it, "the great interior basin of the Salt Lake, the country of our destination."¹¹⁰

Although there is no evidence Mormon leaders intended to establish a headquarters in coastal California, clearly some Mormon and the non-Mormon residents of the region thought they would.¹¹¹ Brigham Young learned by July 1847 that Brannan and his company were "comfortably situated with Spanish families" in the San Francisco area and that they had planted crops "expecting us to help eat." Nonetheless, he insisted, their destination was "the great Bason or salt lake . . . to examine the country."¹¹² Accordingly he wanted the commander of the sick detachment to send someone to the coast for the payroll and to "learn the geography of the country," while the soldiers and their families remained in the mountains "in our beautiful city, which we are about to build."¹¹³

Both at Fort Laramie and from travelers along the trail, the Mormon pioneers learned in June a great deal more about the land of their destination. After describing for them "the Bear River valley and the neighborhood of the Salt Lake," one traveler left them "little room to hope, for even a moderate good country anywhere in those regions," although he thought Cache Valley had some possibilities.¹¹⁴ Another agreed that with irrigation the region held promise, but insisted that notwithstanding the rumored richness of the country, the Mormons would certainly find it "vastly over rated" and, if they expected much, be disappointed.¹¹⁵ Although Jim Bridger was concerned that frost would "operate against it becoming a great grain country," he was more

¹⁰⁹Brigham Young to Orson Spencer, April 12, 1847; and Council of the Twelve to Winter Quarters, April 16, 1847, Brigham Young Papers.

¹¹⁰Brigham Young to Absalom Porter Dowdle, June 2, 1847, Brigham Young Papers; and Orson Pratt Diary, June 26, 1847, *Millennial Star* 12 (May 15, 1850): 146.

Pratt's phrasing suggests that they still looked at the region rather than at a precise location within it. It is also clear that they used the terms Great Basin and vicinity of the Salt Lake interchangeably. The draft version of the Dowdle letter, for example, says their destination would be "in the great Basin, or vicinity of the Great Salt Lake." See also Woodruff's "valley of the Salt Lake or great bason," Wilford Woodruff Diary, July 23, 1847.

¹¹¹For examples, see Yurtinus, "The Mormon Battalion," pp. 585, 602, 605, 608, 625.

¹¹²Brigham Young to Amasa Lyman, Charles C. Rich, et al., July 3, 1847, Brigham Young Papers.

¹¹³Brigham Young and Council to Amasa Lyman, July 8, 1847, Brigham Young Papers.

¹¹⁴Heber C. Kimball Diary, June 27, 1847.

¹¹⁵Horace K. Whitney Diary, July 11, 1847, Church Archives.

encouraging. He thought the area around Utah Lake “the best country in vicinity of the Salt Lake” but liked even better the area further south.¹¹⁶

Though not particularly encouraging, this additional information did serve to narrow their focus as they approached the mountains. Settlers, they learned, had already arrived in the upper (northern) Bear River Valley, an area closely associated with the main emigrant trail to Oregon and California. This news confirmed them in their intention to investigate first the area further south.¹¹⁷ They learned also that the area near Utah Lake was a prime Indian stronghold where settlement would likely meet violent resistance.¹¹⁸ Increasingly it appeared that the area north of Utah Lake and south of the Bear River offered “for the present at least” the best prospects.¹¹⁹

Brigham Young, forced to stop along the trail because of illness, gave his final instructions to the advance party of the caravan in writing — and the message preserves the fact that he still had not proclaimed a specific location. To avoid crowding the Utes, he urged the pioneers to “bear toward the region of the Salt Lake, rather than the Utah Lake” and there immediately select a place for crops “regardless of a future location.” The object was to find “some point in the Basin” and plant. After planting, continued the message, we “shall select a site for our location [a headquarters and temple-city] at our leisure.”¹²⁰ Following President Young’s instructions, Orson Pratt’s advance party entered the “long sought valley” on July 22 and explored “about 20 miles North” before selecting a “permanent camp ground.”¹²¹ The following day Pratt called the camp together to offer “prayer and thanksgiving” and to dedicate themselves and the land “unto the Lord.” They then set to work with team and plow.¹²²

Since the 1830s Mormon leaders had believed that the Saints had a destiny in the trans-Mississippi West and, as has been seen, by 1840 there had been discussion about a specific refuge “preparing” in the Rocky Mountains. At least from that point, the still-future exodus became for Mormon leaders a matter of deep religious significance. Brigham Young and the Twelve clearly believed that directing the westward movement was a divinely appointed “errand,” one that God would oversee. Not surprisingly, their exodus-related decisions were influenced not only by practical information and needs but also by religious faith. Nor were detailed information and earlier spiritual impressions enough. Even in the mountains of the West, before proclaiming a new temple city, Brigham Young awaited final providential confirmation that they had, indeed, found the “place prepared.”

When Brigham Young first gazed upon the Valley, according to his care-

¹¹⁶Wilford Woodruff Diary, June 28, 1847; and William Clayton Diary, June 28, 1847, photocopy, Church Archives.

¹¹⁷See Christian, “Mormon Westward Migration,” pp. 200–3. Settlement had begun in the area east of Fort Hall near Soda Springs, in present-day Idaho.

¹¹⁸Thomas Bullock Minutes, June 28, 1847.

¹¹⁹Brigham Young to Amasa Lyman, Charles Rich, et al., July 3, 1847.

¹²⁰Willard Richards and George A. Smith to Orson Pratt, July 21, 1847, *Journal History*, Church Archives.

¹²¹See Orson Pratt, Willard Richards, George A. Smith to Brigham Young, July 22, 1847, Brigham Young Papers; and Thomas Bullock Diary, July 22, 1847.

¹²²Orson Pratt Diary, July 23, 1847; *Millennial Star* 12:178–79.

fully prepared history, the “Spirit of Light rested on me and hovered over the valley, and I felt that there the Saints would find protection and safety.” Wilford Woodruff later elaborated: “He had seen the valley before in vision, and upon this occasion he saw the future glory of Zion and of Israel, as they would be, planted in the valleys of these mountains.” When the vision had passed Young said, “It is enough. This is the right place. Drive on.”¹²³

Erastus Snow, member of the pioneer company and later apostle, gave perhaps the most detailed account of this “providential version” of selecting a headquarters location. They had come, according to Snow, seeking “a country which had been pointed out by the Prophet Joseph Smith in the midst of the Rocky Mountains.” As they traveled they knew not the terminus of their journey, but that “God had commanded them to go into a land which he would show them.” When asked about a destination Brigham Young told the pioneers:

“I will show you when we come to it. . . . I have seen it in vision, and when my natural eyes behold it, I shall know it.” And when they reached this land the Prophet Brigham said — “This is the place where I, in vision, saw the ark of the Lord resting.”

President Young then told the pioneers, continued Snow, to investigate in every direction the prospects for settlement. They would find many excellent places, he assured them, but upon returning, “you will say with me, ‘this is the place the Lord has chosen for us to commence our settlements and from this place we shall spread abroad and possess the land.’”¹²⁴

This reminiscence is compatible with contemporary records of Young’s entrance and first days in the Salt Lake Valley, as the decision was first confirmed and then shared with all. The first view of the long-anticipated scenery was clearly a moment charged with religious emotion. In his diary Wilford Woodruff described the valley as the “land of promise held in reserve by the hand of God for a resting place for the Saints,” adding that here would stand the House of God, here would be unfurled the ensign to the nations. Though ill, wrote Woodruff “President Young expressed his full satisfaction in the appearance of the valley as a resting place for the saints and was amply repayed for his journey.”¹²⁵

Once in the valley, Brigham Young did not immediately designate a temple and city site. “This valley seems well calculated for a starting place” and “it is contemplated to commence a location here,” noted Heber Kimball in his diary, “although we design looking round further.” Specifically, they were interested in a particular hill from which the flag would fly above the temple and the city, as they had anticipated while still in Nauvoo. On July 26 Brigham

¹²³Manuscript History of Brigham Young, July 23, 1847, Church Archives; and Wilford Woodruff Address, July 24, 1880, *The Utah Pioneers*, p. 23, quoted in B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century I*, 6 vols., (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), 3:224. Compare this with Woodruff’s June 12, 1892 recounting in *Millennial Star* 54 (September 12, 1892): 590. Another informant insisted that Young repeated emphatically “This is the place, this is the place, this is the place.” Autobiography of Gilbert Belnap, typescript, Church Archives.

¹²⁴Erastus Snow Discourse, September 14, 1873, *Journal of Discourses* 16:207.

¹²⁵Wilford Woodruff Diary, July 24, 1847.

Young and associates set out to examine the "high hills" to the north of camp. Though still feeble from his illness, President Young insisted on climbing "a high Peak in the edge of the mountain which was considered a good place to raise an ensign." This he named Ensign Peak (or Ensign Hill).¹²⁶ Brigham Young now was ready to formally designate a site. The following day he and Heber Kimball moved their wagons from the camp "to the intended site of the City," and on July 28 they and the other apostles present met in council and confirmed the location.¹²⁷ That evening they also convened a meeting of all the camp "on the spot intended for a temple lot."¹²⁸

For nearly a week camp members had plowed, planted, explored. Now President Young wanted feelings frankly expressed. "Shall we look further or make a location upon this spot?" he asked. Erastus Snow spoke out strongly in favor of "this place," both because all who explored returned satisfied with it and, he added, because "the Lord led us directly to it." To this there was general agreement. Brigham Young responded by saying he thought that the brethren would be willing to accept revelation and "be entirely satisfied" even if the place designated was barren rock. "I know," he continued, that this

is the spot, and we have come here according to the suggestion and direction of Joseph Smith. . . . The word of the Lord, was, "go to that valley and the best place you can find in it is the spot." Well, I prayed that he would lead us directly to the best spot, which he has done, for after searching we can find no better.

When one member of the camp expressed preference for another location, Brigham Young acknowledged his right to a different viewpoint, but concluded: "I knew this spot as soon as I saw it. Up there on that table ground we shall erect the Standard of Freedom."¹²⁹ Another account reported that Young told those assembled that "he knew that this was the place for the City fore he had seen it before, and that we were now standing on the South east corner of the Temple Block."¹³⁰

Until he arrived, Brigham Young had appeared tentative and flexible. Once upon the ground, however, he expressed no doubts about the location, but instead declared that they had found the "place prepared." This he repeatedly reaffirmed in later months. "This is the Spot that I [h]av[e] anticipated," he repeated to the pioneer camp before returning to Winter Quarters for his family.¹³¹ And when he returned to the Valley the following year he similarly explained to the new arrivals, as one recorded: "This is the place he had seen

¹²⁶Heber C. Kimball Diary, July 24 and 26, 1847; and Wilford Woodruff Diary, July 26, 1847. See also diaries of Thomas Bullock and William Clayton for this date.

¹²⁷Thomas Bullock Diary, July 27, 1847; and George A. Smith History, July 28, 1847, typescript, Church Archives.

¹²⁸Norton Jacobs Diary, July 28, 1847, typescript, Church Archives.

¹²⁹Norton Jacobs Diary, July 28, 1847. See also Thomas Bullock Minutes, July 28, 1847; and Thomas Bullock Diary, Church Archives.

¹³⁰"Sketch of the Life of Levi Jackman," section prepared from notes with dated entries, July 28, 1847, Church Archives. See also the reminiscence of Lewis Barney, typescript, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, pp. 44-45.

¹³¹Thomas Bullock Minutes, August 8, 1847. See also Horace K. Whitney Diary, August 8, 1847, Church Archives.

before he came here & it was the place for the Saints to geather." "[Joseph] S[mith] & myself [h]ad both seen this place years ago," he stated during the first Pioneer Day celebration in 1849, "& that is why we [a]r[e] here."¹³²

Mormon leaders had long sought a place of health and safety and what they found fulfilled their expectations. The isolation of the Great Basin would provide the long-needed "bulwark of strength to protect the infant kingdom of God while it should gather itself strength."¹³³ Others, too, recognized advantages inherent in the new location and predicted that if the Mormon masses made it to their Rocky Mountain haven "all hell cant drive them out." Hearing this, Brigham agreed. "They never will be drove unless they drive themselves . . . & that I calculate to stop," he responded. "I prophecy that myself."¹³⁴ To the Twelve, he announced, as they met to reorganize their new home: "This I [k]no[w] is the place for the L[atter] D[ay] S[aints]," the place where, if faithful, "they will become a mighty p[eo]p[le] that no power can prevail ag[ain]st them."¹³⁵

The long-sought Valley was now headquarters, the Valley was home. Saints already in California, he counseled, could tarry in their "goodly land" or come to the Valley as they chose, but "we wish to make this a Strong hold, a rallying point, a more immediate gathering place than any other." From the Basin "let the work go out, & in [the] process of time the Shores of the Pacific may be over looked from the Temples of the Lord."¹³⁶

The whisperings of the Spirit is now to all saints. gather yourselves together, to the place which has been pointed out, for a place of rest & Salvation; a place for the building of the House of the Lord, a place "sought out," and a city which need not be forsaken [if] the inhabitants thereof will work righteousness.¹³⁷

And what did this new beginning, this new epoch, offer Brigham Young? A chance, he felt, to build the Kingdom of God on earth, to work for the establishment of Zion — in short, a place where he could labor the days of his life toward realizing what he envisioned when he first arrived. Twenty years later he reported: "The people have hardly commenced to realize the beauty, excellence, and glory that will yet crown this city. I do not know," he continued, "that I will live in the flesh to see what I saw in vision when I came here. I see some things, but a great deal more has yet to be accomplished."¹³⁸

¹³²Hosea Stout Diary, September 24, 1848, 1:327; and Thomas Bullock Minutes, July 24, 1849.

¹³³Brigham Young Discourse, July 31, 1859, *Journal of Discourses* 6:345.

¹³⁴Minutes, May 14, 1848, Miscellaneous Minutes, Church Archives. Instead of devoting energies to defense, Young expected that in the Great Basin they would be safe and free to "preach to all nations the peaceable things of the K[ingdom]."

¹³⁵Minutes, February 11, 1849.

¹³⁶Brigham Young and the Twelve to California Saints, August 7, 1847, Brigham Young Papers.

¹³⁷Brigham Young to Nathaniel Felt, November 24, 1847, Brigham Young Papers. See also Brigham Young and the Twelve to Orson Spencer, November 25, 1847, Brigham Young Papers.

¹³⁸Brigham Young Discourse, June 30, 1867, *Journal of Discourses* 12:94.

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